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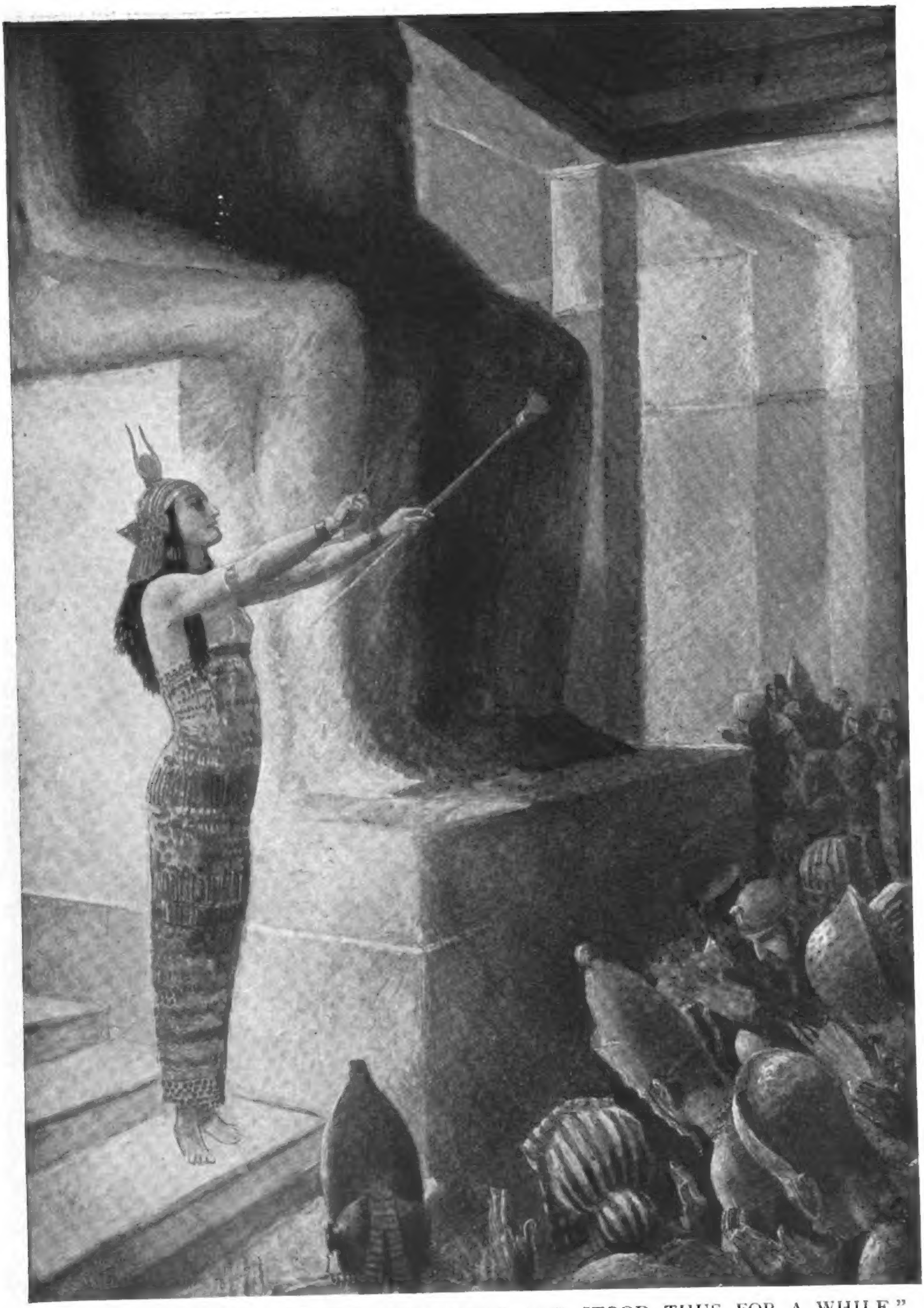


ONE of the most conspicuous objects at t
larger bookstalls and bookshops throug
out the country during the past few wee
has been a striking statuette, some twelve inch
high, of Professor Challenger, the hero
"THE LOST WORLD." Its purpose
to remind the public that Sir A. Con
Doyle's famous story may now be obtain
in book form, and the publishers, Mess
Hodder and Stoughton, are to be congrat
lated on their novel form of announceme

NEXT month we hope to give our readers mo
particulars of "THE POISON BELT
the story in which some further adventures
Professor Challenger and his fellow-explore
are to be related by Sir A. Conan Doy

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"QUEEN CLEOPATRA LIFTED HER HANDS AND STOOD THUS FOR A WHILE."

(*See page* 11.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. xlv. JANUARY, 1913. No. 265.

Smith and the Pharaohs.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD

Illustrated by Alec Ball.

SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST INSTALMENT.

Wandering one day among the Egyptian sculptures in the British Museum, Smith falls in love with the plaster cast of an unknown woman's head, which seems to him to return his gaze with a mysterious smile. As a result, he becomes an ardent Egyptologist, and spends his holidays in excavation work in Egypt. On his third visit he finds in a tomb the head of a statuette, whose smiling features he immediately recognizes as those of the cast in the Museum, and whose name he discovers from the hieroglyphics is Queen Ma-Mee. Realizing that he is in her desecrated tomb, he renews his search, and also finds a mummied hand bearing two gold rings

PART II.

SMITH was seated in the sanctum of the distinguished Director-General of Antiquities at the new Cairo Museum. It was a very interesting room. Books piled upon the floor; objects from tombs awaiting examination, lying here and there; a hoard of Ptolemaic silver coins, just dug up at Alexandria, standing on a table in the pot that had hidden them for two thousand years; in the corner the mummy of a royal child not long ago discovered, with some inscription scrawled upon the wrappings (brought here to be deciphered by the Master), and the withered lotus-bloom, love's last offering, thrust beneath one of the pink retaining bands.

"A touching object," thought Smith to himself. "Really, they might have left the poor little dear in peace."

Smith had a tender heart, but even as he reflected he became aware that some of the jewellery hidden in an inner pocket of his waistcoat (designed for bank-notes) was fretting his skin. He had a tender conscience also.

Just then the Director bustled in, alert, vigorous, full of interest.

"Ah, my dear Mr. Smith!" he said, in his excellent English. "I am indeed glad to see you back again, especially as I understand that you are come rejoicing and bringing your sheaves with you. They tell me you have been extraordinarily successful. What do you say is the name of this queen whose tomb you have found—Ma-Mee? A very unusual name. How do you get the extra vowel? Is it for euphony—eh? Did I not know how *good* a scholar you are, I should be tempted to believe that you had misread it. Ma-Mee! Ma-Mee! That would be pretty in French, would it not? *Ma mie*—my darling! Well, I dare say she was somebody's *mie* in her time. But tell me the story."

Smith told him shortly and clearly; also he produced his photographs and copies of inscriptions.

"This is interesting—interesting truly," said the Director, when he had glanced through them. "You must leave them with me to study. Also you will publish them, is it not so? Perhaps one of the Societies would help you with the cost, for it should be done in facsimile. Look at this vignette! Most unusual. Oh, what a pity that scoundrelly priest got off with the jewellery and burnt her Majesty's body!"

"He didn't get off with all of it."

"What, Mr. Smith? Our inspector reported to me that you found nothing."

"I dare say, sir; but your inspector did not know what I found."

"Ah, you are discreet! Well, let us see."

Slowly Smith unbuttoned his waistcoat. From its inner pocket and elsewhere about his person he extracted the jewels wrapped in mummy-cloth as he had found them. First he produced a sceptre-head of gold, in the shape of a pomegranate fruit and engraved with the throne name and titles of Ma-Mee.

"What a beautiful object!" said the Director. "Look! the handle was of ivory, and that *sacré* thief of a priest smashed it out at the socket. It was fresh ivory then; the robbery must have taken place not long after the burial. See, this magnifying-glass shows it. Is that all?"

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Smith handed him the surviving half of the marvellous necklace that had been torn in two.

"I have re-threaded it," he muttered, "but every bead is in its place"

"Oh, heavens! How lovely! Note the cutting of those cornelian heads of Hathor and the gold lotus-blooms between—yes, and the enamelled flies beneath. We have nothing like it in the Museum."

So it went on.

"Is that all?" gasped the Director at last, when every object from the basket glittered before them on the table.

"Yes," said Smith. "That is—no. I found a broken statuette hidden in the sand outside the tomb. It is of the queen, but I thought perhaps you would allow me to keep this."

"But certainly, Mr. Smith; it is yours indeed. We are not niggards here. Still, if I might see it——"

From yet another pocket Smith produced the head. The Director gazed at it, then he spoke with feeling.

"I said just now that you were discreet, Mr. Smith, and I have been reflecting that you are honest. But now I must add that you are very clever. If you had not made me promise that this bronze should be yours before you showed it me—well, it would never have gone into that pocket again. And, in the public interest, won't you release me from the promise?"

"*No!*" said Smith.

"You are perhaps not aware," went on the Director, with a groan, "that this is a portrait of Mariette's unknown queen whom we are thus able to identify. It seems a pity that the two should be separated; a replica we could let you have."

"I am quite aware," said Smith, "and I will be sure to send *you* a replica, with photographs. Also I promise to leave the original to some museum by will."

The Director clasped the image tenderly, and, holding it to the light, read the broken cartouche beneath the breasts.

"'Ma-Mé, Great Royal Lady. Beloved of——' Beloved of whom? Well, of Smith, for one. Take it, monsieur, and hide it away at once, lest soon there should be another mummy in this collection, a modern mummy called Smith; and, in the name of Justice, let the museum which inherits it be, not the British, but that of Cairo, for this queen belongs to Egypt. By the way, I have been told that you are delicate in the lungs. How is your health now? Our cold winds are very trying. Quite good? Ah, that is excellent! I suppose that you have no more articles that you can show me?"

"I have nothing more except a mummied hand, which I found in the basket with the jewels. The two rings off it lie there. Doubtless it was removed to get at that bracelet. I suppose you will not mind my keeping the hand——"

"Of the beloved of Smith," interrupted the Director, drolly. "No, I suppose not, though for my part I should prefer one that was not quite so old. Still, perhaps *you* will not mind my seeing it. That pocket of yours still looks a little bulky; I thought that it contained books!"

Smith produced a cigar-box; in it was the hand wrapped in cotton-wool.

"Ah," said the Director, "a pretty, well-bred hand. No doubt this Ma-Mee was the real heiress to the throne, as she describes herself. The Pharaoh was somebody of inferior birth, half-brother—she is called 'Royal Sister,' you remember—son of one of the Pharaoh's slave-women, perhaps. Odd that she never mentioned him in the tomb. It looks as though they didn't get on in life, and that she was determined to have done with him in death. Those were the rings upon that hand, were they not?"

He replaced them on the fingers, then took off one, a royal signet in a cartouche, and read the inscription on the other: "'Bes Ank, Ank Bes.' 'Bes the Living, the Living Bes.'

"Your Ma-Mee had some human vanity about her," he added. "Bes, among other things, as you know, was the god of beauty and of the adornments of women. She wore that ring that she might remain beautiful, and that her dresses might always fit, and her rouge never cake when she was dancing before the gods. Also it fixes her period pretty closely, but then so do other things. It seems a pity to rob Ma-Mee of her pet ring, does it not? The royal signet will be enough for us."

With a little bow he gave the hand back to Smith, leaving the Bes ring on the finger that had worn it for more than three thousand years. At least, Smith was so sure it was the Bes ring that at the time he did not look at it again.

Then they parted, Smith promising to return upon the morrow, which, owing to events to be described, he did not do.

"Ah!" said the Master to himself, as the door closed behind his visitor. "He's in a hurry to be gone. He has fear lest I should

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change my mind about that ring. Also there is the bronze. Monsieur Smith was *rusé* there. It is worth a thousand pounds, that bronze. Yet I do not believe he was thinking of the money. I believe he is in love with that Ma-Mee and wants to keep her picture. *Mon Dieu!* A well-established affection. At least he is what the English call an odd fish, one whom I could never make out, and of whom no one seems to know anything. Still, honest, I am sure—quite honest. Why, he might have kept every one of those jewels and no one have been the wiser. And what things! What a find! *Ciel!* what a find! There has been nothing like it for years. Benedictions on the head of Odd-fish Smith!"

Then he collected the precious objects, thrust them into an inner compartment of his safe, which he locked and double-locked, and, as it was nearly five o'clock, departed from the Museum to his private residence in the grounds, there to study Smith's copies and photographs, and to tell some friends of the great things that had happened.

When Smith found himself outside the sacred door, and had presented its venerable guardian with a baksheesh of five piastres, he walked a few paces to the right and paused awhile to watch some native labourers who were dragging a huge sarcophagus upon an improvised tramway. As they dragged they sang an echoing rhythmic song, whereof each line ended with an invocation to Allah.

Just so, reflected Smith, had their forefathers sung when, millenniums ago, they dragged that very sarcophagus from the quarries to the Nile, and from the Nile to the tomb whence it reappeared to-day, or when they slid the casing blocks of the pyramids up the great causeway and smooth slope of sand, and laid them in their dizzy resting-places. Only then each line of the immemorial chant of toil ended with an invocation to Amen, now transformed to Allah. The East may change its masters and its gods, but its customs never change, and if to-day Allah wore the feathers of Amen one wonders whether the worshippers would find the difference so very great.

Thus thought Smith as he hurried away from the sarcophagus and those blue-robed, dark-skinned fellaheen, down the long gallery that is filled with a thousand sculptures. For a moment he paused before the wonderful white statue of Queen Amenartas, then, remembering that his time was short, hastened on to a certain room, one of those which opened out of the gallery.

In a corner of this room, upon the wall, amongst many other beautiful objects, stood that head which Mariette had found, whereof in past years the cast had fascinated him in London. Now he knew whose head it was; to him it had been given to find the tomb of her who had sat for that statue. Her very hand was in his pocket—yes, the hand that had touched yonder marble, pointing out its defects to the sculptor, or perhaps swearing that he flattered her. Smith wondered who that sculptor was; surely he must have been a happy man. Also he wondered whether the statuette was also this master's work. He thought so, but he wished to make sure.

Near to the end of the room he stopped and looked about him like a thief. He was alone in the place; not a single student or tourist could be seen, and its guardian was somewhere else. He drew out the box that contained the hand. From the hand he slipped the ring which the Director-General had left there as a gift to himself. He would much have preferred the other with the signet, but how could he say so, especially after the episode of the statuette?

Replacing the hand in his pocket without looking at the ring—for his eyes were watching to see whether he was observed—he set it upon his little finger, which it exactly fitted. (Ma-Mee had worn both of them upon the third finger of her left hand, the Bes ring as a guard to the signet.) He had the fancy to approach the effigy of Ma-Mee wearing a ring which she had worn and that came straight from her finger to his own.

Smith found the head in its accustomed place. Weeks had gone by since he looked upon it, and now, to his eyes, it had grown more beautiful than ever, and its smile was more mystical and living. He drew out the statuette and began to compare them point by point. Oh, no doubt was possible! Both were likenesses of the same woman, though the statuette might have been executed two or three years later than the statue. To him the face of it looked a little older and more spiritual. Perhaps illness, or some premonition of her end had then thrown its shadow on the queen. He compared and compared. He made some rough measurements and sketches in his pocket-book, and set himself to work out a canon of proportions.

So hard and earnestly did he work, so lost was his mind that he never heard the accustomed warning sound which announces that the Museum is about to close. Hidden behind an altar as he was, in his distant, shadowed corner, the guardian of the room never saw

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him as he cast a last perfunctory glance about the place before departing till the Saturday morning; for the morrow was Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath, on which the Museum remains shut, and he would not be called upon to attend. So he went. Everybody went. The great doors clanged, were locked and bolted, and, save for a watchman outside, no one was left in all that vast place except Smith in his corner, engaged in sketching and in measurements.

The difficulty of seeing, owing to the increase of shadow, first called his attention to the fact that time was slipping away. He glanced at his watch and saw that it was ten minutes to the hour.

"Soon be time to go," he thought to himself, and resumed his work.

How strangely silent the place seemed! Not a footstep to be heard or the sound of a human voice. He looked at his watch again, and saw that it was six o'clock, not five, or so the thing said. But that was impossible, for the Museum shut at five; evidently the desert sand had got into the works. The room in which he stood was that known as Room I, and he had noticed that its Arab custodian often frequented Room K or the gallery outside. He would find him and ask what was the real time.

Passing round the effigy of the wonderful Hathor cow, perhaps the finest example of an ancient sculpture of a beast in the whole world, Smith came to the doorway and looked up and down the gallery. Not a soul to be seen. He ran to Room K, to Room H, and others. Still not a soul to be seen. Then he made his way as fast as he could go to the great entrance. The doors were locked and bolted.

"Watch must be right, after all. I'm shut in," he said to himself. "However, there's sure to be someone about somewhere. Probably the *salle des ventes* is still open. Shops don't shut till they are obliged."

Thither he went, to find its door as firmly closed as a door can be. He knocked on it, but a sepulchral echo was the only answer.

"I know," he reflected. "The Director must still be in his room. It will take him a long while to examine all that jewellery and put it away."

So for the room he headed, and, after losing his path twice, found it by help of the sarcophagus that the Arabs had been dragging, which now stood as deserted as it had done in the tomb, a lonesome and impressive object in the gathering shadows. The Director's door was shut, and again his knockings produced nothing but an echo. He started on a tour round the Museum, and, having searched the ground floors, ascended to the upper galleries by the great stairway.

Presently he found himself in that devoted to the royal mummies, and, being tired, rested there a while. Opposite to him, in a glass case in the middle of the gallery, reposed Rameses II. Near to, on shelves in a side case, were Rameses' son, Meneptah, and above, his son, Seti II., while in other cases were the mortal remains of many more of the royalties of Egypt. He looked at the proud face of Rameses and at the little fringe of white locks turned yellow by the embalmer's spices, also at the raised left arm. He remembered how the Director had told him that when they were unrolling this mighty monarch they went away to lunch, and that presently the man who had been left in charge of the body rushed into the room with his hair on end, and said that the dead king had lifted his arm and pointed at him.

Back they went, and there, true enough, was the arm lifted; nor were they ever able to get it quite into its place again. The explanation given was that the warmth of the sun had contracted the withered muscles, a very natural and correct explanation.

Still, Smith wished that he had not recollected the story just at this moment, especially as the arm seemed to move while he contemplated it—a very little, but still to move.

He turned round and gazed at Meneptah, whose hollow eyes stared at him from between the wrappings carelessly thrown across the parchment-like and ashen face. There, probably, lay the countenance that had frowned on Moses. There was the heart which God had hardened. Well, it was hard enough now, for the doctors said he died of ossification of the arteries, and that the vessels of the heart were full of lime!

Smith stood upon a chair and peeped at Seti II. above. His weaker countenance was very peaceful, but it seemed to wear an air of reproach. In getting down Smith managed to upset the heavy chair. The noise it made was terrific; he would not have thought it possible that the fall of such an article could produce so much sound. Satisfied with his inspection of these particular kings, who somehow looked quite different now from what they had ever done before—more real and imminent, so to speak—he renewed his search for a living man.

On he went, mummies to his right, mummies to his left, of every style and period, till he

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began to feel as though he never wished to see another dried remnant of mortality. He peeped into the room where lay the relics of Iouiya and Touiyou, the father and mother of the great Queen Taia. Cloths had been drawn over these, and really they looked worse and more suggestive thus draped than in their frigid and unadorned blackness. He came to the coffins of the priest-kings of the twentieth dynasty, formidable painted coffins with human faces. There seemed to be a vast number of these priest-kings, but perhaps they were better than the gold masks of the great Ptolemaic ladies which glinted at him through the gathering gloom.

Really, he had seen enough of the upper floors. The statues downstairs were better than all these dead, although it was true that, according to the Egyptian faith, every one of those statues was haunted eternally by the *Ka*, or double, of the person whom it represented. He descended the great stairway. Was it fancy, or did something run across the bottom step in front of him—an animal of



"ONCE HE SHOUTED IN THE HOPE OF ATTRACTING ATTENTION."

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some kind, followed by a swift-moving and indefinite shadow? If so, it must have been the Museum cat hunting a Museum mouse. Only, then what on earth was that very peculiar and unpleasant shadow?

He called, "Puss! puss! puss!" for he would have been quite glad of its company; but there came no friendly "miau" in response. Perhaps it was only the *Ka* of a cat and the shadow was—oh! never mind what. The Egyptians worshipped cats, and there were plenty of their mummies about on the shelves. But the shadow!

Once he shouted in the hope of attracting attention, for there were no windows to which he could climb. He did not repeat the experiment, for it seemed as though a thousand voices were answering him from every corner and roof of the gigantic edifice.

Well, he must face the thing out. He was shut in a museum, and the question was in what part of it he should camp for the night. Moreover, as it was growing rapidly dark, the problem must be solved at once. He thought with affection of the lavatory, where, before going to see the Director, only that afternoon he had washed his hands with the assistance of a kindly Arab who watched the door and gracefully accepted a piastre. But there was no Arab there now, and the door, like every other in this confounded place, was locked. He marched on to the entrance.

Here, opposite to each other, stood the red sarcophagi of the great Queen Hatshepu and her brother and husband, Thothmes III. He looked at them. Why should not one of these afford him a night's lodging? They were deep and quiet, and would fit the human frame very nicely. For a while Smith wondered which of these monarchs would be the more likely to take offence at such a use of a private sarcophagus, and, acting on general principles, concluded that he would rather throw himself on the mercy of the lady.

Already one of his legs was over the edge of that solemn coffer, and he was squeezing his body beneath the massive lid that was propped above it on blocks of wood, when he remembered a little, naked, withered thing with long hair that he had seen in a side chamber of the tomb of Amenhotep II. in the Valley of Kings at Thebes. This caricature of humanity many thought, and he agreed with them, to be the actual body of the mighty Hatshepu as it appeared after the robbers had done with it.

Supposing, now, that when he was lying at the bottom of that sarcophagus, sleeping the sleep of the just, this little personage should peep over its edge and ask him what he was doing there! Of course the idea was absurd; he was tired, and his nerves were a little shaken. Still, the fact remained that for centuries the hallowed dust of Queen Hatshepu had slept where he, a modern man, was proposing to sleep.

He scrambled down from the sarcophagus and looked round him in despair. Opposite to the main entrance was the huge central hall of the Museum. Now the cement roof of this hall had, he knew, gone wrong, with the result that very extensive repairs had become necessary. So extensive were they, indeed, that the Director-General had informed him that they would take several years to complete. Therefore this hall was boarded up, only a little doorway being left by which the workmen could enter. Certain statues, of Seti II. and others, too large to be moved, were also roughly boarded over, as were some great funeral boats on either side of the entrance. The rest of the place, which might be two hundred feet long with a proportionate breadth, was empty save for the colossi of Amenhotep III. and his queen Taia that stood beneath the gallery at its farther end.

It was an appalling place in which to sleep, but better, reflected Smith, than a sarcophagus or those mummy chambers. If, for instance, he could creep behind the deal boards that enclosed one of the funeral boats he would be quite comfortable there. Lifting the curtain, he slipped into the hall, where the gloom of evening had already settled. Only the skylights and the outline of the towering colossi at the far end remained visible. Close to him were the two funeral boats which he had noted when he looked into the hall earlier on that day, standing at the head of a flight of steps which led to the sunk floor of the centre. He groped his way to that on the right. As he expected, the protecting planks were not quite joined at the bow. He crept in between them and the boat and laid himself down.

Presumably, being altogether tired out, Smith did ultimately fall asleep, for how long he never knew. At any rate, it is certain that, if so, he woke up again. He could not tell the time, because his watch was not a repeater, and the place was black as the pit. He had some matches in his pocket, and might have struck one and even have lit his pipe. To his credit be it said, however, he remembered that he was the sole tenant of one of the most valuable museums in the world, and his

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responsibilities with reference to fire. So he refrained from striking that match under the keel of a boat which had become very dry in the course of six thousand years.

Smith found himself very wide awake indeed. Never in all his life did he remember being more so, not even in the hour of its great catastrophe, or when his godfather, Ebenezer, after much hesitation, had promised him a clerkship in the bank of which he was a director. His nerves seemed strung tight as harp-strings, and his every sense was painfully acute. Thus he could even smell the odour of mummies that floated down from the upper galleries and the earthy scent of the boat which had been buried for thousands of years in sand at the foot of the pyramid of one of the fifth dynasty kings.

Moreover, he could hear all sorts of strange sounds, faint and far-away sounds which at first he thought must emanate from Cairo without. Soon, however, he grew sure that their origin was more local. Doubtless the cement work and the cases in the galleries were cracking audibly, as is the unpleasant habit of such things at night.

Yet why should these common manifestations be so universal and affect him so strangely? Really, it seemed as though people were stirring all about him. More, he could have sworn that the great funeral boat beneath which he lay had become re-peopled with the crew that once it bore.

He heard them at their business above him. There were tramplings and a sound as though something heavy were being laid on the deck, such, for instance, as must have been made when the mummy of Pharaoh was set there for its last journey to the western bank of the Nile. Yes, and now he could have sworn again that the priestly crew were getting out the oars.

Smith began to meditate flight from the neighbourhood of that place when something occurred which determined him to stop where he was.

The huge hall was growing light, but not, as at first he hoped, with the rays of dawn. This light was pale and ghostly, though very penetrating. Also it had a blue tinge, unlike any other he had ever seen. At first it arose in a kind of fan or fountain at the far end of the hall, illumining the steps there and the two noble colossi which sat above.

But what was this that stood at the head of the steps, radiating glory? By heavens, it was Osiris himself, or the image of Osiris, God of the Dead, the Egyptian saviour of the world!

There he stood, in his mummy-cloths, wearing the feathered crown, and holding in his hands, which projected from an opening in the wrappings, the crook and the scourge of power. Was he alive, or was he dead? Smith could not tell, since he never moved, only stood there, splendid and fearful, his calm, benignant face staring into nothingness.

Smith became aware that the darkness between him and the vision of this god was peopled; that a great congregation was gathering, or had gathered there. The blue light began to grow; long tongues of it shot forward, which joined themselves together, illumining all that huge hall.

Now, too, he saw the congregation. Before him, rank upon rank of them, stood the kings and queens of Egypt. As though at a given signal, they bowed themselves to the Osiris, and ere the tinkling of their ornaments had died away, lo! Osiris was gone. But in his place stood another, Isis, the Mother of Mystery, her deep eyes looking forth from beneath the jewelled vulture-cap. Again the congregation bowed, and, lo! she was gone. But in her place stood yet another, a radiant, lovely being, who held in her hand the Sign of Life, and wore upon her head the symbol of the shining disc —Hathor, Goddess of Love. A third time the congregation bowed, and she, too, was gone; nor did any other appear in her place.

The Pharaohs and their queens began to move about and speak to each other; their voices came to his ears in one low, sweet murmur.

In his amaze Smith had forgotten fear. From his hiding-place he watched them intently. Some of them he knew by their faces. There, for instance, was the long-necked Khu-en-aten, talking somewhat angrily to the imperial Rameses II. Smith could understand what he said, for this power seemed to have been given to him. He was complaining in a high, weak voice that on this, the one night of the year when they might meet, the gods, or the magic images of the gods who were put up for them to worship, should not include *his* god, symbolized by the "Aten," or the sun's disc.

"I have heard of your Majesty's god," replied Rameses; "the priests used to tell me of him, also that he did not last long after your Majesty flew to heaven. The Fathers of Amen gave you a bad name; they called you 'the heretic' and hammered out your cartouches. They were quite rare in my time. Oh, do not let your Majesty be angry! So many of us have been heretics. My grandson, Seti, there"—and he pointed

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to a mild, thoughtful-faced man—" for example. I am told that he really worshipped the God of those Hebrew slaves whom I used to press to build my cities. Look at that lady with him. Beautiful, isn't she? Observe her large, violet eyes! Well, she was the one who did the mischief, a Hebrew herself. At least, they tell me so."

"I will talk with him," answered Khu-en-aten. "It is more than possible that we may agree on certain points. Meanwhile, let me explain to your Majesty——"

"Oh, I pray you, not now. There is my wife."

"Your wife?" said Khu-en-aten, drawing himself up. "Which wife? I am told that your Majesty had many and left a large family; indeed, I see some hundreds of them here to-night. Now, I—but let me introduce Nefertiti to your Majesty. I may explain that she was my *only* wife."

"So I have understood. Your Majesty was rather an invalid, were you not? Of course, in those circumstances, one prefers the nurse whom one can trust. Oh, pray, no offence! Nefertari, my love—oh, I beg pardon!—Astnefert—Nefertari has gone to speak to some of her children—let me introduce you to your predecessor, the Queen Nefertiti, wife of Amenhotep IV.—I mean Khu-en-aten (he changed his name, you know, because half of it was that of the father of the gods). She is interested in the question of plural marriages. Good-bye! I wish to have a word with my grandfather, Rameses I. He was fond of me as a little boy."

At this moment Smith's interest in that queer conversation died away, for of a sudden he beheld none other than the queen of his dreams, Ma-Mee. Oh! there she stood, without a doubt, only ten times more beautiful than he had ever pictured her. She was tall and somewhat fair-complexioned, with slumbrous, dark eyes, and on her face gleamed the mystic smile he loved. She wore a robe of simple white and a purple-broidered apron, a crown of golden *uræi* with turquoise eyes was set upon her dark hair as in her statue, and on her breast and arms were the very necklace and bracelets that he had taken from her tomb. She appeared to be somewhat moody, or rather thoughtful, for she leaned by herself against a balustrade, watching the throng without much interest.

Presently a Pharaoh, a black-browed, vigorous man with thick lips, drew near.

"I greet your Majesty," he said.

She started, and answered: "Oh, it is you! I make my obeisance to your Majesty," and she curtsied to him, humbly enough, but with a suggestion of mockery in her movements.

"Well, you do not seem to have been very anxious to find me, Ma-Mee, which, considering that we meet so seldom——"

"I saw that your Majesty was engaged with my sister queens," she interrupted, in her rich, low voice, "and with some other ladies in the gallery there, whose faces I seem to remember, but who I think were *not* queens. Unless, indeed, you married them after I was drawn away."

"One must talk to one's relations," replied the Pharaoh.

"Quite so. But, you see, I have no relations—at least, none whom I knew well. My parents, you will remember, died when I was young, leaving me Egypt's heiress, and they are still vexed at the marriage which I made on the advice of my councillors. But, is it not annoying? I have lost one of my rings, that which had the god Bes on it. Some dweller on the earth must be wearing it to-day, and that is why I cannot get it back from him."

"Him! Why 'him'? Hush; the business is about to begin."

"What business, my lord?"

"Oh, the question of the violation of our tombs, I believe."

"Indeed! That is a large subject, and not a very profitable one, I should say. Tell me, who is that?" And she pointed to a woman who had stepped forward, a very splendid person, magnificently arrayed.

"Cleopatra the Greek," he answered, "the last of Egypt's Sovereigns, one of the Ptolemys. You can always know her by that Roman who walks about after her."

"Which?" asked Ma-Mee. "I see several—also other men. She was the wretch who rolled Egypt in the dirt and betrayed her. Oh, if it were not for the law of peace by which we must abide when we meet thus!"

"You mean that she would be torn to shreds, Ma-Mee, and her very soul scattered like the limbs of Osiris? Well, if it were not for that law of peace, so perhaps would many of us, for never have I heard a single king among these hundreds speak altogether well of those who went before or followed after him."

"Especially of those who went before if they happen to have hammered out their cartouches and usurped their monuments," said the queen, dryly, looking him in the eyes.

At this home-thrust the Pharaoh seemed to wince. Making no answer, he pointed to the royal woman who had mounted the steps at the end of the hall.

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"SHE ANSWERED: 'I MAKE MY OBEISANCE TO YOUR MAJESTY.'"

Queen Cleopatra lifted her hands and stood thus for a while. Very splendid she was, and Smith, on his hands and knees behind the boarding of the boat, thanked his stars that alone among modern men it had been his lot to look upon her rich and living loveliness. There she shone, she who had changed the fortunes of the world, she who, whatever she did amiss, at least had known how to die.

(To be concluded.)

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From a Photograph by W. S. Stuart.

Queen Alexandra at Marlborough House.

By W. T. ROBERTS.

This article gives the first authentic description of Marlborough House and its many treasures as arranged at the present day. It is illustrated by an exclusive set of photographs taken specially by the gracious permission of Her Majesty.

THOSE whose memory takes them back to the days of Marlborough House as it was during the reign of Queen Victoria would perceive great changes could they revisit it. By express command of Queen Alexandra, everything has now been replaced so that it shall present precisely the same appearance as it did during the many very happy years she spent here as Princess of Wales. This has been carried out down to the smallest detail. Especially is this the case with regard to the apartments that were used by the late King Edward. Entering these rooms, one could almost imagine that that gracious and genial spirit had just quitted them and might be expected to return at any moment. This has been a work of love to the widowed Queen, whose memory with regard to the rearrangement of the late King's rooms shows more than anything else could do the loving care with which she watched over him for so many years. The portrait that now hangs over the mantelpiece in his private room, where he transacted business affairs when he was Prince of Wales, is that of the late King taken a short



THE QUEEN'S PRIVATE DINING-ROOM, THE WALLS OF WHICH ARE COVERED ALMOST ENTIRELY WITH SEA PICTURES. THE DINING-TABLE IS REMOVED DURING THE DAY.

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HER MAJESTY'S SITTING-ROOM, IN WHICH HER LOVE FOR PHOTOGRAPHS IS SHOWN TO THE FULL.

time before he died. In former days the place of this was taken by a painting of Queen Alexandra as a bride.

Those who pass Marlborough House almost daily have but small idea of the wonderful collection of valuable treasures that are hidden behind the walls that shield the house from public view. The place has been described as "one vast treasure-house," and this is by no means an exaggeration.

It is, of course, the private apartments of Queen Alexandra that offer the greatest attraction when going over Marlborough House. Admission to these is very jealously guarded, and only Her Majesty's most intimate friends, together with a few highly-favoured Court officials, are ever allowed to enter them. They comprise four apartments in all—dining-room, sitting-room, bedroom, and dressing-room. Leading out of the latter apartment is Her Majesty's bathroom, a beautiful little apartment in pure white marble. The walls of the dining-room are panelled in silk of a pale apple-green shade—Her Majesty's favourite colour, by the way. This room represents more truly than any other in the whole of Marlborough House Her Majesty's personal tastes. The walls are covered almost entirely with sea-pictures, as becomes "the Sea King's daughter from over the sea." Over the mantelpiece hangs an almost perfectly-executed painting of the late King Edward in his uniform as a British Field-Marshal. The devotion of the Queen to the memory of her beloved husband is to be seen everywhere throughout her London residence. Pictures and photographs of him are to be seen in nearly every apartment, while little relics all recall that lovable figure that so suddenly passed from among us.

One of the most interesting pictures in Her Majesty's private dining-room is that of the small protected cruiser *Bacchante*, in which the present King and the late Duke of Clarence and Avondale made their memorable voyage round the Empire. The little ship is shown battling nobly against a gale.

From Her Majesty's dining-room access is directly gained to her sitting-room, an apartment to which no one but the members of her own family are admitted without a special invitation. The prevailing shade here is a delicate tinge of crimson that gives the apartment—one of the largest—a bright aspect even upon the most cheerless day. It is here that Her Majesty attends to that considerable volume of business that still demands her attention. Her Majesty's love for photographs of members of her family and others who have been admitted to her private

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friendship is shown to the full here. Photographs abound upon all sides and wherever they can be placed. Upon her handsome writing-table stands one of the last photographs ever taken of the late King Edward. While at Marlborough House the Queen passes practically the whole of her mornings in this room, going through her always heavy correspondence and attending to such other matters as require to be dealt with. Her Majesty's great love for music is also displayed here by the presence of her favourite piano. Placed upon it are two autographed photographs of the late Lady Hallé (Mme. Norman Neruda), who was honoured with the personal friendship of the Queen for several years. She used to be a frequent visitor to Marlborough House in bygone days, her violin always accompanying her. The two would play together for hours.



KING EDWARD'S "BUSINESS ROOM"—IN THE CENTRE STANDS THE ROLL-TOP DESK AT WHICH HIS MAJESTY TRANSACTED THE WHOLE OF HIS STATE AFFAIRS.

Close at hand is the Royal music cabinet, containing sets of the works of the whole of Her Majesty's favourite composers, and this collection is being constantly added to. The late Queen, by the way, had a great liking for the old Scottish songs and ballads, and would much rather hear these than the classical compositions to which Queen Alexandra's tastes more incline.

The sitting-room is filled with personal treasures of one description or another. For the most part these are simple little things, but full of value to Her Majesty, and each with an interesting story attached to it. There are, for example, photographs of the late Duke of Clarence and Avondale and the present King in the costumes they wore when they attended their first fancy-dress ball, while upon one of the walls hangs an excellent painting of King Edward as a child in his sailor suit. The number of signed photographs of foreign Royalties to be found in this room is positively amazing, and it would be quite impossible to enumerate them all. Queen Alexandra is insistent that all photographs presented to her should be autographed, so that the value of the portraits in this one room is almost impossible to enumerate. Her Majesty, by the way, always likes to have a photograph of those who serve her, even in the humblest capacity, and makes it a rule to ask the subjects to sign them before they are placed in her collection. One of the photographs in Her Majesty's boudoir is that of Princess Victoria Louise, the only daughter of the German Emperor and Empress, which was signed and forwarded to her during their last State visit to London.

Reference has already been made to the "business room" of the late King Edward that is situated upon this floor. There is no room in the whole residence that possesses such pathetic interest for all who are honoured by a peep at it. In the centre of the floor stands the roll-top desk at which His Majesty

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transacted the whole of his State affairs during his reign. It was seated here that King Edward received his Ministers and the foreign diplomatists accredited to the Court of St. James's.

The table is a most fascinating one, and it is hard to leave it when one realizes the scenes, probably destined to become historic, of which it has been a silent witness, and the mute part that it has played in the story of the British Empire.

There is one more feature in his late Majesty's business room that compels attention, and that is a quite unique screen made up of photographs. It took King Edward many years to collect these. Very few Royalties figure among them. The collection includes many of the most prominent politicians of recent years, among them being the Earl of Beaconsfield, the Marquess of Salisbury, and Mr. Gladstone. It was characteristic of the innate tactfulness of the late King that he never added a portrait of any living statesman to this collection, though, of course, he had several given to him, at his request, at one time and another, and it was not until after the funeral of the late Marquess of Salisbury that His Majesty placed his portrait on the screen with his own hands. Needless to say, this room is never now used for any purpose whatever, and it is only by special permission of Queen Alexandra that it may be inspected.

Upon the same floor as Queen Alexandra's private apartments and within easy reach are the rooms usually allotted to any foreign Royalties who may be staying at Marlborough House. Beyond these rooms again is what is known as the Sheraton library, from the prevailing style of the furniture. Here are contained the books that Her Majesty requires for everyday use. Queen Alexandra is a great reader, especially of memoirs and modern history. Her tastes are most catholic, but books dealing with any phase of music or art appeal to her with the greatest force. Novels of the modern school, upon the other hand, have little or no attraction for her.

Directly above Her Majesty's private apartments are those of the Princess Victoria, which are connected with Her Majesty's by telephone. This recalls the fact that among the many other curios preserved at Marlborough House is the first telephone to be placed in a private residence in this country. It was made on board H.M.S. *Thunderer* in 1878 by the engineers, and presented to Queen Alexandra. It was installed between the schoolroom of the Royal children and Her Majesty's sitting-room, and very delighted were the present King and his brother and sisters to be able to "ring up" their mother. Very clumsy and old-fashioned this appears to-day, compared with the very complete installation of telephones that Marlborough House now contains.

Among what may perhaps be termed the "State apartments" at Marlborough House (though this term is not, of course, strictly correct) is the truly wonderful Plate Room. It is to be doubted if there is such a display of gold and silver to be seen in the whole of Europe as is to be found here, with the single exception of the gold plate closets at Windsor Castle. Some years ago the Court jeweller called at Marlborough House to see the late King Edward, and he was taken by His Majesty into this apartment, and invited to give some idea of the intrinsic value of its contents. He gazed around him in amazement at the countless treasures displayed upon all sides, and then hazarded, as a rough guess, two millions sterling. Of course it is impossible to estimate what prices would be obtained if the contents of this room were ever offered for public sale. It should be added that none of the many articles displayed here are State property, but were presented personally to the late King Edward and to Queen Alexandra.

Ranged round the spacious apartment are air-tight glass cases, filled with some of the most magnificent specimens of the goldsmiths' and silversmiths' art that have ever been produced. Hanging over this table is a handsome shield of solid gold, sent to the late King many years ago by his brother-in-law, the late Emperor Frederick. Elsewhere in this room are to be seen presents from the head of almost every European State, while the late Mikado of Japan celebrated the bestowal upon him of the Order of the Garter by sending to King Edward, under the care of Prince Arthur of Connaught —who bestowed the insignia upon him—a truly magnificent specimen of native silverwork. There is likewise a silver pipe from the ex-Sultan of Turkey, and a gold cigar-box of striking workmanship that was presented to King Edward by the actors of England as a recognition of the many benefits that he bestowed upon their profession.

To give even the briefest catalogue of the treasures contained in this room would be to fill this magazine. The whole of the silver and gold plate usually used at Marlborough House is stored here, and every item in the collection is carefully numbered and

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entered into large books kept specially for the purpose. Thus it is possible for any article to be produced at a moment's notice. In addition to Queen Alexandra, the only person who has keys admitting him to any of the cases in the Treasure Room is General Sir Dighton Probyn, V.C. Needless to add, the precautions taken against burglary at Marlborough House are the most elaborate that could be devised, and Bill Sikes would have but a very poor chance of success even if he succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the outer guard that constantly patrols the grounds throughout the night.

The chief of the State apartments is the saloon, which stands upon the ground floor and is entered direct from the wonderfully handsome entrance-hall. This is the most spacious apartment in the whole house, and contains the priceless Gobelin tapestries of which so much is often heard. Of even more interest, however, is the handsome pier-glass over the marble mantelpiece. This bears upon it the date, April 28, 1863. This was the day upon which the then Prince of Wales and his beautiful bride entered into possession of their London home. It is in this saloon that distinguished visitors await the intimation that Her Majesty will receive them in her private apartments. Often, however, Queen Alexandra will descend to the saloon if there is anyone present whom she specially desires to honour and escort them to her drawing-room in person.

The saloon is likewise utilized as the outer reception chamber upon the occasion of a large dinner-party at Marlborough House. The Red Drawing-Room is directly approached from the saloon. It is one of the most handsomely-appointed apartments in the whole of the reception suite. Its principal attraction consists of beautifully-executed life-size paintings of the late Queen Victoria, the Prince Consort, the late Empress Frederick of Germany, and Queen Alexandra. There is likewise an interesting little painting upon a side-table of Queen Alexandra on horseback. This painting was executed to the order of the late King Edward, and was for many years in his private room before being placed in its present position.

Close to the reception suite stand the official apartments of the principal officers of Her Majesty's household. Perhaps the most interesting of these is what is known as the Equerries' Room. It is into this apartment that duly-authorized callers are shown

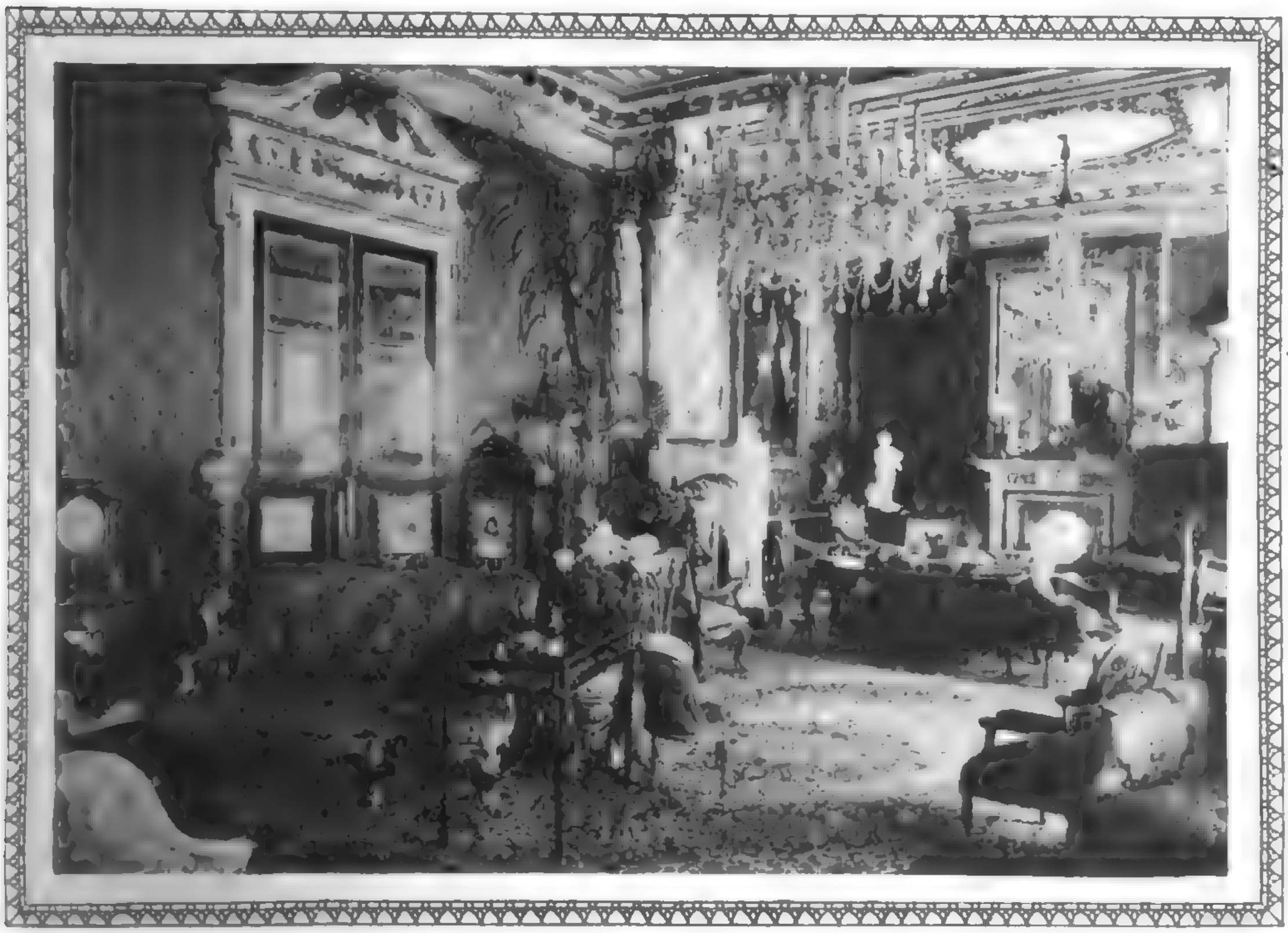


THE SALOON—THE MOST SPACIOUS APARTMENT IN MARLBOROUGH HOUSE—CONTAINS THE PRICELESS GOBELIN TAPESTRIES.

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who desire to make any inquiries as to Her Majesty's movements, etc. This is a plainly but comfortably-furnished apartment, and gains its principal interest from the pictures upon the walls, which are devoted almost



THE RED DRAWING-ROOM, IN WHICH THE PRINCIPAL ATTRACTIONS ARE THE LIFE-SIZE PAINTINGS OF QUEEN VICTORIA, THE PRINCE CONSORT, THE EMPRESS FREDERICK OF GERMANY, AND QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

exclusively to commemorating the late King's connection with the Turf. There is, for instance, a large painting of the desperate finish for the Derby of 1896, when His Majesty's horse, Persimmon, just got the best of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild's St. Frusquin, thus gaining for its Royal owner his first "Blue Ribbon of the Turf." Persimmon was always King Edward's favourite horse. Other horses shown on the walls of the Equerries' Room are Diamond Jubilee and Ambush II., the latter of which placed the Grand National to the credit of the late King.

The room of General Sir Dighton Probyn, V.C., Her Majesty's Comptroller of the Household, is closely adjacent, and it is here that the whole business of the administration of Queen Alexandra's affairs is carried out.

It has been truly said that everything proceeds as though by clockwork at Marlborough House, and it is to be doubted if there is a more efficiently-administered residence in the whole of the kingdom. Queen Alexandra is a most kindly and thoughtful mistress, and no little services that are rendered to her are permitted to go unrecognized. Everyone, from the highest to the lowest, is fully acquainted with the work he or she is retained to perform, and they are expected to do it without any undue supervision. Many acts of kindness and generosity on the part of Queen Alexandra are recounted by all those who have served at her town residence for any length of time. Her Majesty is very solicitous as to the future of all who have served under her, and no old servant is allowed to leave her employ without a suitable pension. It can scarcely be wondered at, therefore, that she is almost idolized by those in her household, and that her smallest wish is carried out almost as soon as it is spoken. In her manner towards those in her employ, as in so many other instances, Queen Alexandra is a worthy example to the women of this country.

The photographs in this article are by Grove & Boulton.

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The Boy in Blue.

By
WINIFRED GRAHAM.

Illustrated by Ruby Lind.

I.

LADY TRENCH was looking strangely excited, while Sir Ranulph, a surly man who seldom unbent to anyone, appeared ill at ease and worse tempered than usual. The staff at Coddrington Hall had been informed that visitors were expected for the New Year, but the names of the guests did not transpire.

Sir Ranulph and Lady Trench appeared unusually secretive; they always spoke guardedly at meals now when the servants were in the room. Halpin, an old retainer, who had maided Lady Trench as a girl, felt convinced some mystery was afloat.

"I wouldn't be surprised," she said to Hill, the butler, "if Mr. Leonard were coming home, after all these years. Though he is never mentioned, I can't believe an only son will be cut off for good and all."

Thrilled by her own prophecy, Halpin wore an expectant air as she dressed Lady Trench's luxuriant locks, streaked with grey.

"The visitors come to-morrow, don't they, my lady?" she ventured to remark.

She noticed in the glass that her mistress's lips trembled.

"Halpin," she said, "you are like an old friend, and I want you to help me. I feel I must tell you the great sorrow of my life. I am sure you will not abuse my confidence."

Halpin grew pink to her forehead with eager anticipation, as she assured the speaker of her absolute fidelity.

"You remember," said Lady Trench, "when Mr. Leonard left us very suddenly eight years ago to live abroad. Well, I could not speak of it then, but, though a mere boy, he was married. We arranged for him to hide away in a far-off mining camp, to save the disgrace of his *mésalliance* with a foreign dancer, Estelle Reine. From that day his father intended never to speak to him again, but now this woman is dead, and my boy is returning to me with his only child. I dread to think what the little girl will be like, dragged up in a Californian settlement, where her mother rubbed shoulders with the roughest men. You can assist me by keeping Miss Kara out of the way, and helping to correct any dreadful errors of behaviour."

Halpin was trembling all over. The thought of seeing Mr. Leonard again was too much for her composure, as she cheered Lady Trench with regard to the child.

Certainly New Year's Eve, the day of arrival, became filled with magic importance. A grandchild was coming to Coddrington Hall; the patter of little feet and the sound of youthful laughter would again be heard. Leonard himself was not yet thirty, and his wife had been dead for two years, so he had passed the first stage of grief.

Only Sir Ranulph looked glum and frowning as the hour drew near for the arrival of the guests. He was seated with his wife over a great log fire in the old raftered hall. Above the chimney hung two family portraits—a small girl in a long, old-world frock and round bonnet, with sunny curls and wide

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grey eyes, next to a boy wearing a suit of blue satin. They represented Sir Ranulph's father and mother in childhood, and now he sat with his eyes fixed on the familiar paintings.

"I wish," he muttered, half under his breath, "that Leonard had left his brat behind. This is no place for her. She'll be a thorn in your flesh, Monica, an untamed savage tainted by her mother's blood."

Lady Trench raised her head a little proudly.

"It is just possible," she replied, clinging to a faint hope, "that our son's breeding may triumph."

The tower clock chimed five, and Lady Trench sprang to her feet as she caught the sound of an approaching vehicle. Her heart beat so wildly she could hardly draw her breath; then she saw the menservants hurrying to the door. Clutching the back of a high carved chair, she watched with dim eyes for the coming of her New Year's guests. Leonard strode in, tall and erect, as if no shadow of shame had ever fallen on his life. He was bronzed from years spent beneath a baking sun, and looked far handsomer than when he had left his home of luxury. Beside him walked Kara, a tiny girl in a long, quaintly-cut dress, exactly similar to the old portrait of her great-grandmother. The same picture bonnet rested, apparently, on the very same curls; the child in the hall might have stepped out of the frame, so like was she in feature, as well as dress, to her Trench ancestress.

Sir Ranulph and his wife stood for a moment transfixed; then mother and son were clasped in each other's arms. Kara, seeing the old man alone, drew near to him and stretched out a friendly hand.

"Are you grandpapa?" she asked. "Or is it the other gentleman?"

She glanced back at Hill, who had picked up a little ermine stole she dropped as she ran forward.

The clear, childish voice had no note of commonness, only a musical ring, to which Sir Ranulph turned a deaf ear.

"She cannot even tell a gentleman from a servant," he thought, as he shook off the clinging fingers with a curt "How do you do?"

As no other woman was present, Kara had no doubt who was her grandmother. She pulled at Lady Trench's skirt, and, pointing up to the mantelpiece, asked, with all simplicity:—

"Please, who is the little boy in blue, standing next my likeness?"

"She thinks it is herself," said Leonard, with an amused smile. "I considered her so like my grandmother that I made a sketch of the frock, to remind me of the old days. She has been always asking me to draw her pictures of Coddrington. By the way, is Halpin still alive and with you?"

As Lady Trench nodded assent, Kara began dancing about with sudden glee, and the old man noticed with aversion how light were her steps, remembering the mother's profession.

"I want to see Halpin," Kara declared, emphatically. "She's the one that makes toffee, isn't she?"

"Her sole desire," thought Sir Ranulph, "is to get to the servants' hall."

Leonard felt already the uncongeniality of his father's stiff attitude, and, in order to escape the glacial gaze, he told Kara they would go together and "fish Halpin out at once." Lady Trench followed, and her husband sank back in the old oak chair to gaze into the red sea of coal, with drawn brows and unsmiling mouth.

II.

WHEN Leonard and his mother were alone he gave her a brief outline of the past.

"You never saw Estelle," he said, "so you cannot imagine how beautiful she was. Of course, we were both very young; we were just like children together, enjoying every moment of life. She was simply adored in California; all those rough men could not have treated her with greater respect had she been a duchess. Two years ago a bad epidemic of fever broke out; then Estelle showed what she really was. The men went down like flies under the plague, and she nursed them day and night till every vestige of her own strength was worn out. Finally the fever seized her wasted frame, and she died in two hours. I thought at the time I should have to send Kara home to be taken care of in England, but those men whose lives Estelle had saved made it possible for me to keep my little one in the camp. Scrupulously they guarded and protected the child they felt Estelle had left as a sacred trust. No foul word, no coarse jest, ever reached Kara's ears. A new-comer would have been half-murdered if he had not behaved like a gentleman in the baby's presence. I don't think you will find her spoilt, though we have all been her slaves. The only thing she can't understand is any unkindness or lack of geniality."

"Her grandfather's attitude, for instance," murmured Lady Trench, with a heavy sigh.

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"Perhaps you noticed he did not kiss her; but time may alter his bitterness, and I, for one, shall welcome the New Year in with a light heart. Oh, Leonard, it's good to see you back—almost too good to be true."

As Leonard and his mother discussed past days Halpin was revelling in the society of Kara, who was explaining exactly what she thought of Coddrington and its inhabitants.

"This house seems rather quiet after our other home," she said. "I hope some day I shall live in a tent again. The men used to sing at night—like this."

Standing up with her arms akimbo, she imitated one of the old camp songs familiar to her from babyhood.

"I used to dress like a boy there," she continued; "and I had three ponies. There were no old men, and they rather puzzled me, because they were not a bit like papa and his friends. I thought grandfathers were people who took the children on their knees and loved them a little. Why doesn't my grandfather love me, Halpin?"

"Oh, but he does, my dearie," said the maid, blushing at the blatant lie; "but sometimes he has an attack of gout."

Suddenly Kara's face grew serious, as if with increased knowledge.

"Perhaps," she said, "all men don't like little girls."

"Well, I must own," added Halpin, "the master is far fonder of boys. But you can't help not being a grandson. I often see him staring up at those pictures in the hall, and it's always the boy in the blue suit he looks at specially. If you are very good you shall see in an old carved chest the very suit that your great-grandfather wore when that portrait was painted."

Kara was so impatient to examine the relic that Halpin was obliged to take her at once to the box-room and unearth the little tunic, the white lace ruffles, and still unfaded breeches with their paste buttons.

When the fanciful costume had been duly admired, Halpin unfolded the evening's programme.

"You are to lie down and go to sleep for some hours," she said; "then, after dinner, I shall dress you and bring you down to hear the New Year singers, who will be coming quite late. They are singing for money, but they are not poor people, as you might suppose. It's something quite novel this year. The gentry are performing, and collecting money for the hospital. They are coming to us last, as Lady Trench has asked them all to supper to see the New Year in."

Realizing that Miss Kara ought already to be asleep, Halpin tucked her away in a cosy bed without further conversation, for she was anxious to get a few words with Mr. Leonard to tell him how delighted she was with the beautiful child, who had come like a ray of sunshine to gladden the New Year at Coddrington Hall.

III.

KARA, tired from the excitement of arrival, dropped quickly off to sleep. Her brain was full of Halpin's words, and she dreamt she was the little grandson Sir Ranulph might have loved. Then she woke with a sense of fear and disappointment, to find herself alone in the dimly-lighted room, a jumble of confused thoughts floating through her mind.

"When I want anything very badly," she told herself, "I just make-believe, and it seems all right. I wonder if grown-up people do that too?"

A sudden idea had taken hold of the sensitive nature, as she remembered what she had seen in the old box-room upstairs. Tremulously she crept forth from her bed, determined to carry out a very great and important undertaking. This was New Year's Eve, and grandpapa must be made happy. No matter that the long corridors were winding and dreary, and the lumber-room to which Halpin had taken her a place where ghostly visitants might hover. Setting her teeth, she took a deep breath, and started on her pilgrimage, carrying a lighted candle, the flickering flame revealing a deep intensity in the childish eyes.

Kara herself might have been some tiny spectre of the past, creeping along barefooted in quest of a hidden prize. As she entered the tomb-like chamber, where boxes were piled one upon the other, as coffins in ancient vaults, her youthful imagination created a thousand fears, very real to the baby heart. Monstrous figures with gaping mouths and outstretched arms sat on the arched lids of giant trunks. Scampering feet could be heard in the walls, and the ivy outside, stirred by the evening breeze, tapped the window-panes. Balancing her candle on the edge of an old spinning-wheel, she mastered a wild desire to turn tail and fly back to inhabited rooms. Instead she dived boldly into the box which held the coveted garment.

With eager hands she gathered up the boy's costume in its folds of tissue paper, and just as she held it close to her heart a sudden draught blew out the candle, which fell with a crash to the ground. A ghostly ray of

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moonlight guided her to the passage outside, along which, with pulses beating wildly and a heart that almost stood still, she flew like the wind to the old oak staircase leading back to the cosy bedroom.

"I think the ghosts need not have blown the candle out," she said, with a gasp, as she deposited her treasure on the floor. "They may have thought I was stealing grandpapa's clothes. Perhaps children did not play at 'make-believe' in those days."

For a few moments the little form trembled so violently that dressing became difficult; but gradually as she forgot her terror the charm of donning that picturesque suit filled her with ecstatic delight.

"I must brush back my curls like a boy," she said, "and throw my ribbons away."

When at last Kara emerged in her blue satin finery she was so unlike her usual self that she might have been one of the eerie visions of dead love and passion which haunt old homes. Sir Ranulph had retired to his smoking-room alone after dinner. He told Leonard to stay and talk to his mother, for the old man was out of temper and wished to be undisturbed. He drew a large chair to the hearth, lowered his reading-lamp, and tried to forget disturbing elements in sleep.

His eyes had been closed some moments before he heard a faint footfall in the room. Too lazy to look round, he merely buried his chin deeper in his collar, when the touch of a tiny and very cold finger fell like a snowflake on his wrist. With a start he opened his eyes, telling himself he must be dreaming. There, in the bright light from some old sea-logs, stood a blue-coated figure, a slim, upright boy with laughing eyes and parted lips, materialized from a picture-frame in the raftered hall.



"'I'M YOUR LITTLE GRANDSON,' SHE SAID, HOLDING HERSELF VERY ERECT."

Sir Ranulph sat bolt upright now, and placed his hand on the child's shoulder to make sure it was not a phantom.

Kara was the first to speak.

"I'm your little grandson," she said, holding herself very erect, as if proud of the fact. "Of course I quite see you didn't like that stupid girl, and one must be happy on New Year's Eve. I was sorry to hear you were rather upset, and it must be horrid to have gout. A boy knows just how a man feels, so I came to try and cheer you up."

Kara had never looked prettier than at this moment. The fanciful costume suited her

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"HE CAUGHT KARA UP IN HIS ARMS AND PLACED HER ON HIS KNEE."

childish grace to perfection, showing how perfectly the little figure was moulded.

"How did you get those clothes?" asked Sir Ranulph, surprised and puzzled by this intrusion.

"I found them in a dreadful room," she answered, with a shiver. "My candle blew out, and I was all alone in the dark. But boys are never afraid of that kind of thing."

She laughed derisively as she spoke, and something in the laughter brought vividly back to Sir Ranulph the memory of his mother. Kara continued speaking in her delightfully confidential tone:—

"It was Halpin told me you were much fonder of boys—that's why I decided to be a boy this evening. I wanted you to like me, and I never thought about men not liking girls before, because in the camp they were all my friends; but you see they were not old enough to be grandfathers."

"So you think," said Sir Ranulph, "that grandfathers are all old bears who hate children, and have to be amused by pretence?"

"Father and I always make-believe when we are unhappy," Kara responded. "Sometimes we would pretend we were at Coddrington Hall with you and grandmamma. We did that last Christmas, and it was so nice."

The child had drawn nearer to him now and, with an air of unconscious friendliness, was leaning against his shoulder. Sir Ranulph felt a strange stirring in his veins as the contact of that small, sweet body touched his own congealed clay. Was it possible that the child had made him share her dream of "supposing," and that he was imagining himself an amiable old gentleman in the presence of a grandson who would carry on his name? He felt a wild desire to kiss the masquerader, and gradually, as if drawn by some strong magnetic power, the grey head came nearer the floating curls on the point-lace collar. Suddenly the fact broke upon him that this child had made an effort in her simple, primitive way to soothe his disappointment and cheer the desert waste of an embittered heart. Oddly enough, she wanted his love, and now, with an unexpected rush of feeling, he craved for her affection. A desire to draw those baby wrists about his neck became an obsession. Without a moment's warning he caught Kara up in his arms, placed her on his knee, and laid the curly head against his shoulder. She knew at once her conquest was complete. Comfortably she nestled close to his breast, which heaved quickly with stifled emotion. Spontaneously she touched the

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withered cheek, surprised to see his eyes were moist.

Warmly Kara kissed him with all the fervour of demonstrative childhood, still thinking it was only because she pretended to be a boy that he held her thus closely and made peace.

As the joy-bells chimed out two contrasting figures came hand-in-hand down the broad staircase—a very old man with a smile upon his face, and a boy in blue satin who led him protectingly, weighing still, in infantile imagination, the sorrows of a gouty foot.

After the silent, unseen, ghost-like New Year had been heralded in far and wide throughout the kingdom, a sleepy little blue-clad figure was carried to bed in an old man's arms.

For a few moments Sir Ranulph sat before the nursery fire to warm Kara's toes. He waved away the astonished Halpin, as he unbuttoned the small kid shoes with their large rosettes.

"I saw the New Year quite plainly," whispered Kara. "Did you catch sight of him, grandpapa?"

"No," replied the old man. "My eyes are dim. What was he like, little one?"

Kara's face was full of mystery as she answered:—

"He was very tiny and white. He flew down on a snowflake, and stood over by the dark trees, waiting for us to let him in. I suppose next Christmas he will be old like you. He hasn't very long to live, but perhaps he is thinking now he will be young for ages and ages."

Sir Ranulph took up her fantasy.

"He has the spring for youth, and the warm summer for maturity. In middle age he enjoys the beauty of autumn. Then the winter comes and snuffs him out, and another year will be born, whether we are here or not. We must look for the tiny white phantom together, every New Year's Eve, till I leave you."

Sir Ranulph's voice quivered slightly, and Kara caught the sound of a half-drawn sigh.

"I won't let you leave me," she said, hugging him with all the strength of her baby arms. "Never! Never! Never!"

"'Never' is a long word," he murmured, "even on New Year's Day. Let us make the most of the present, for I have only just found my little 'Blue Boy.'"



"AS THE JOY BELLS CHIMED OUT TWO CONTRASTING FIGURES CAME HAND-IN-HAND DOWN THE STAIRCASE."

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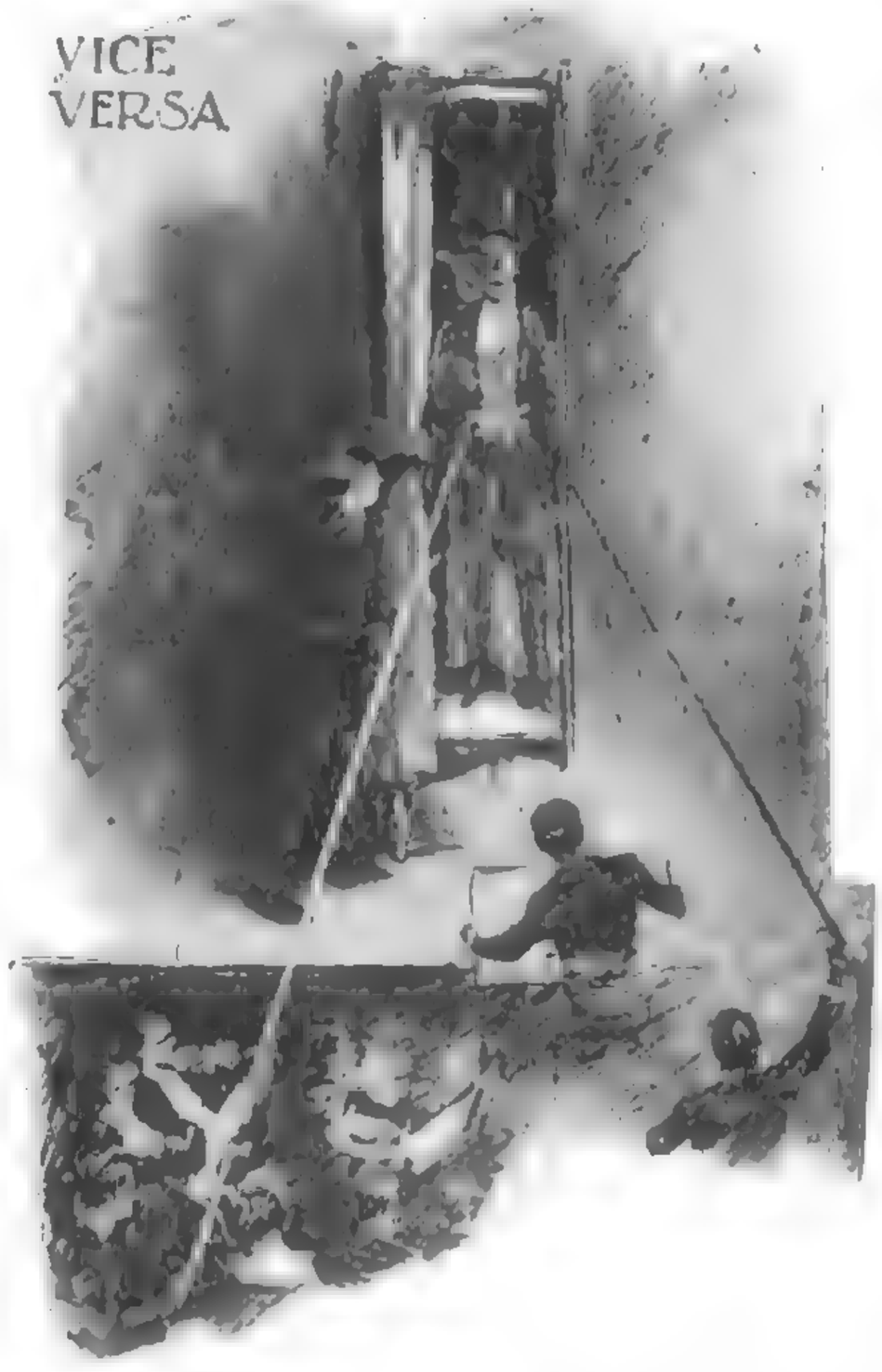
By DAVID DEVANT.

Illustrated by H. K. Elcock.

I AM often asked how I invent illusions. It is a very difficult question to answer, because with such work it is impossible to proceed on well-ordered lines. One cannot say to oneself, "To-morrow I will sit down and invent an illusion." However, I will describe some of the ways in which I have worked.

First, I get an idea for a plot or story, just as the writer of a book does. That idea grows very gradually, and, like a rare bloom, has to be tended very carefully. Sometimes I have to call in the assistance of specialists in different branches of science in order to make the flower grow. Possibly the flower has to be grafted on to another before it finally expands into exhibition form.

The first question I have to propose to myself is, "What shall I do?" The question, "How shall I do it?" is quite a secondary consideration, because there are always many means or devices available for obtaining an effect. That is the reason why so many illusions are pirated; the inventor cannot protect the effect—that is to say, the illusion as the audience see it. The only thing he can do in the way of protecting his own work is to take out a patent for the machinery that he uses to obtain the effect he requires. I have been fortunate enough to discover several illusions which have never been reproduced by other performers. On the other hand, I have originated other illusions which have been copied by magicians all over the world.



The first stage illusion I ever produced was suggested by the title of the book, "Vice Versa," by Mr. Anstey. In this case the effect I wished to produce on the minds of the audience was this. I wanted to convince them, by demonstration and under conditions which seemed to preclude any idea of trickery, that I could turn a man into a woman. The lady was asked to step into a four-posted structure, and to stand on a board three feet square raised by means of posts four feet from the floor. Above the board on which the lady stood the four posts carried light silk curtains for the purpose

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THE ARTIST'S DREAM

of covering her at the moment of the transformation. The audience could see there was no spare room in the structure in which to conceal a child. It was obviously impossible, therefore, that a man could be hidden in the apparatus.

This skeleton cabinet was placed in the centre of the stage of the Opera Theatre at the Crystal Palace. Everyone could see all around it. A long tape was tied round the lady's waist, and the ends were thrown out to spectators seated in the stalls. Two members of the audience were asked to hold the tapes tightly and to report if they felt any movement of the tapes.

I drew the little curtains, and when I again opened them, after an interval of about thirty seconds, the lady had become a man, and the tape which had been tied round her was tied round the man, although the ends were still held by the two members of the audience.

My wife was my assistant on that occasion, and we nearly had a very serious accident. We had tried the illusion on a platform, but not on the stage of a theatre. In those days theatre stages were invariably built with a "rake"—that is to say, with a slanting floor. Owing to the "rake" of the stage, the apparatus became top-heavy directly my wife got into it, and the whole thing began to topple over towards the footlights. Had I not been able to save the cabinet in the nick of time there would have been no performance that evening—except, possibly, the disappearance of my wife into the big drum, and there would have been nothing magical about that.

Mr. Maskelyne saw this, my first big illusion, but the apparatus was too large for the tiny stage of the Egyptian Hall. When he explained this to me I at once undertook to evolve something else. I went home, and in a few days returned to Mr. Maskelyne with a complete model of "The Artist's Dream," which I set out on a table in his office. I went home with the model of my illusion in a bag and a model contract in my pocket. Mr. Maskelyne was to build the illusion and produce it in the form of a sketch; at that time I could not have borne the expense of such an undertaking myself. It was arranged that I should appear and introduce my own illusion, and at the same time make my *début* as a conjurer at the world's headquarters of magic.

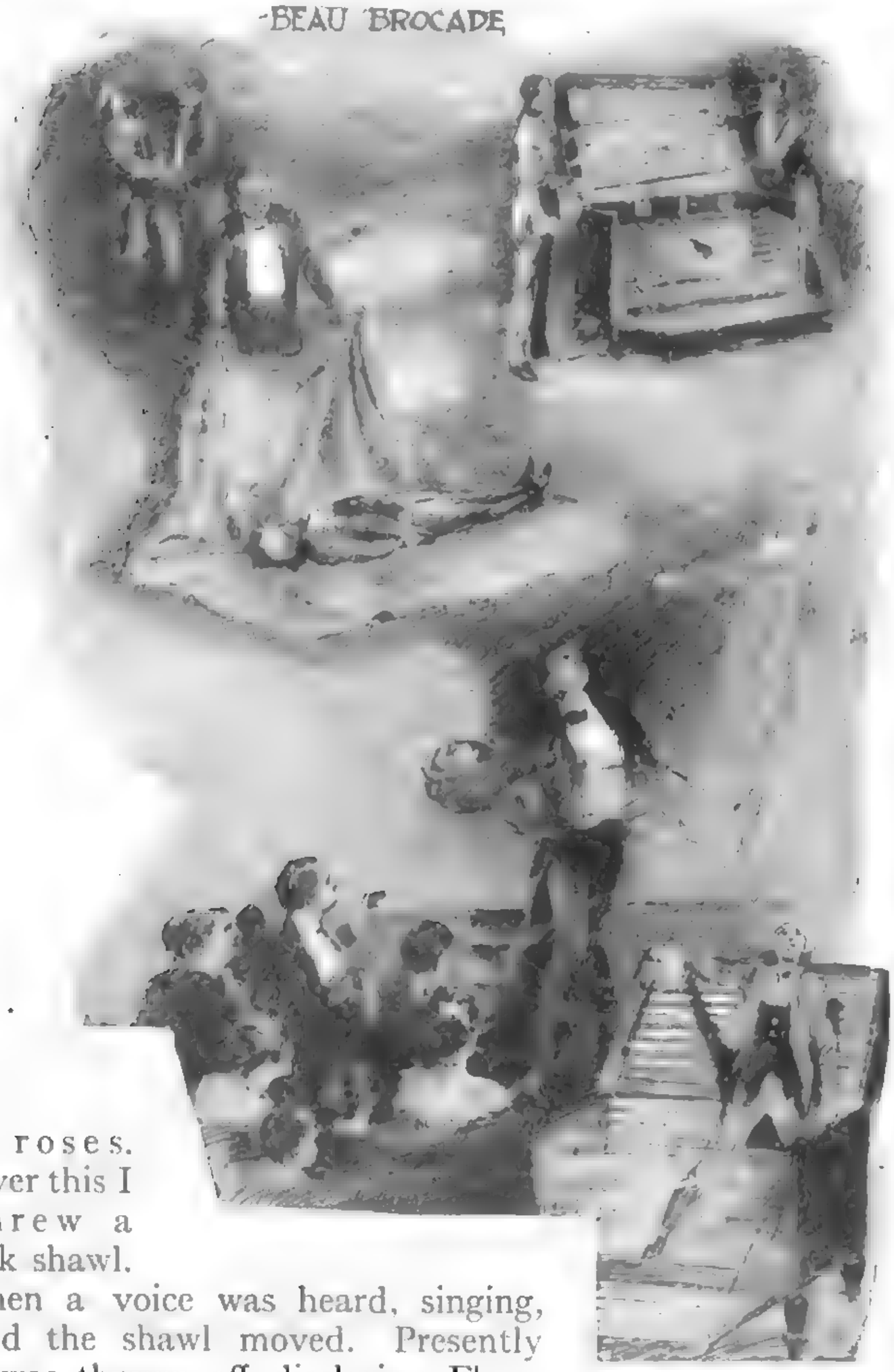
This same "Artist's Dream" I have just lately revived, and I am playing it on my present vaudeville tour. The effect is very simple. A picture on an easel apparently comes to life. A picture-dealer unconsciously suggested this effect to me. My father, who was an artist, was showing the dealer a picture of some cattle drawing a plough. The dealer asked the price of the picture, and my father stated


THE BIRTH OF FLORA

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a sum. The dealer replied, "Yes, I'll give you that when those bulls come to life." In the few seconds that it takes to say that sentence I thought of "The Artist's Dream," a picture that comes to life.

Another of my early illusions, "The Birth of Flora," was suggested by a passing glimpse at a florist's shop. I saw a girl arranging some roses in a gilded basket, and this is how the illusion, based on that idea, was presented. A small table stood on the stage. Above it a banner was hung; the banner was merely hooked on to a bar of wood suspended from the ceiling by two cords. Having produced a bowl of fire and placed it on the table, I went down to the audience, discovered a white rose in a lady's cloak, and asked her permission to use it in the illusion. I pulled the rose to pieces and threw the petals into the bowl of fire. I then lowered the banner so that it hid the bowl for a moment, and when I raised it the burning rose had become a huge basket



of roses. Over this I threw a silk shawl. Then a voice was heard, singing, and the shawl moved. Presently it was thrown off, disclosing Flora,



standing in the basket of flowers.

Some of my illusions have been suggested by current events. The old popular song, "The Honeysuckle and the Bee," suggested an illusion called "The Enchanted Hive," in which the principal "prop" was an enormous beehive. A man who took up his quarters in this hive became his own sweetheart, dressed as a Brobdingnagian bee. He afterwards turned into a detective, who was the villain of the piece. The illusion was used to tell the story, in a kind of burlesque, of a melodramatic sketch.

Baroness Orczy kindly gave me permission to use the title of her book, "Beau Brocade,"

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for that of an illusion. I am afraid the title had not much to do with the illusion, but I wanted a good title, and could think of nothing better. The illusion consisted in making a girl disappear while I was carrying her in my arms in the midst of the audience and causing her to reappear in a box lined with glass and raised from the stage. Another illusion with a happy title was "The Burmese Gong," suggested by seeing an old gong in a shop. Three people were placed in different positions on the stage, and every time the gong was sounded they played a kind of invisible "family coach."

My "Magic Cloak" illusion was suggested by a very ordinary everyday event, but I hesitate to say much about it in print. I was waiting for my wife one evening, and it occurred to me that the invention of a magic cloak, the wearing of which would immediately turn one dress into another, would be very desirable. So I invented one. In the illusion my assistant wore an ordinary evening gown, fastened at the back with hooks. Ladies in the audience were invited to examine it and make sure that the dress was fastened in the usual way. Then the assistant put on the "Magic Cloak," and the dress was changed in an instant to one suitable for a fancy dress ball.

"St. Valentine's Eve" was the title of an illusion I invented simply because I had to think of something that no conjurer had ever done before. The illusion formed the theme of a little sketch. A sheet of newspaper was hung

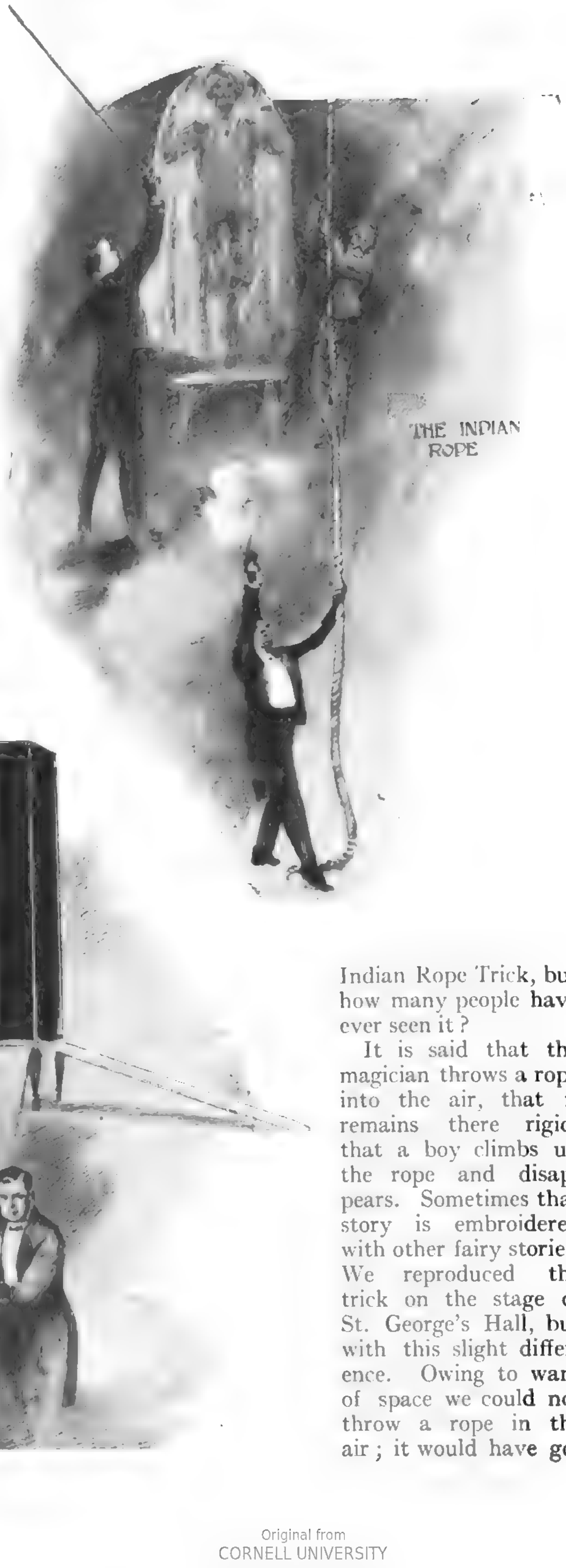


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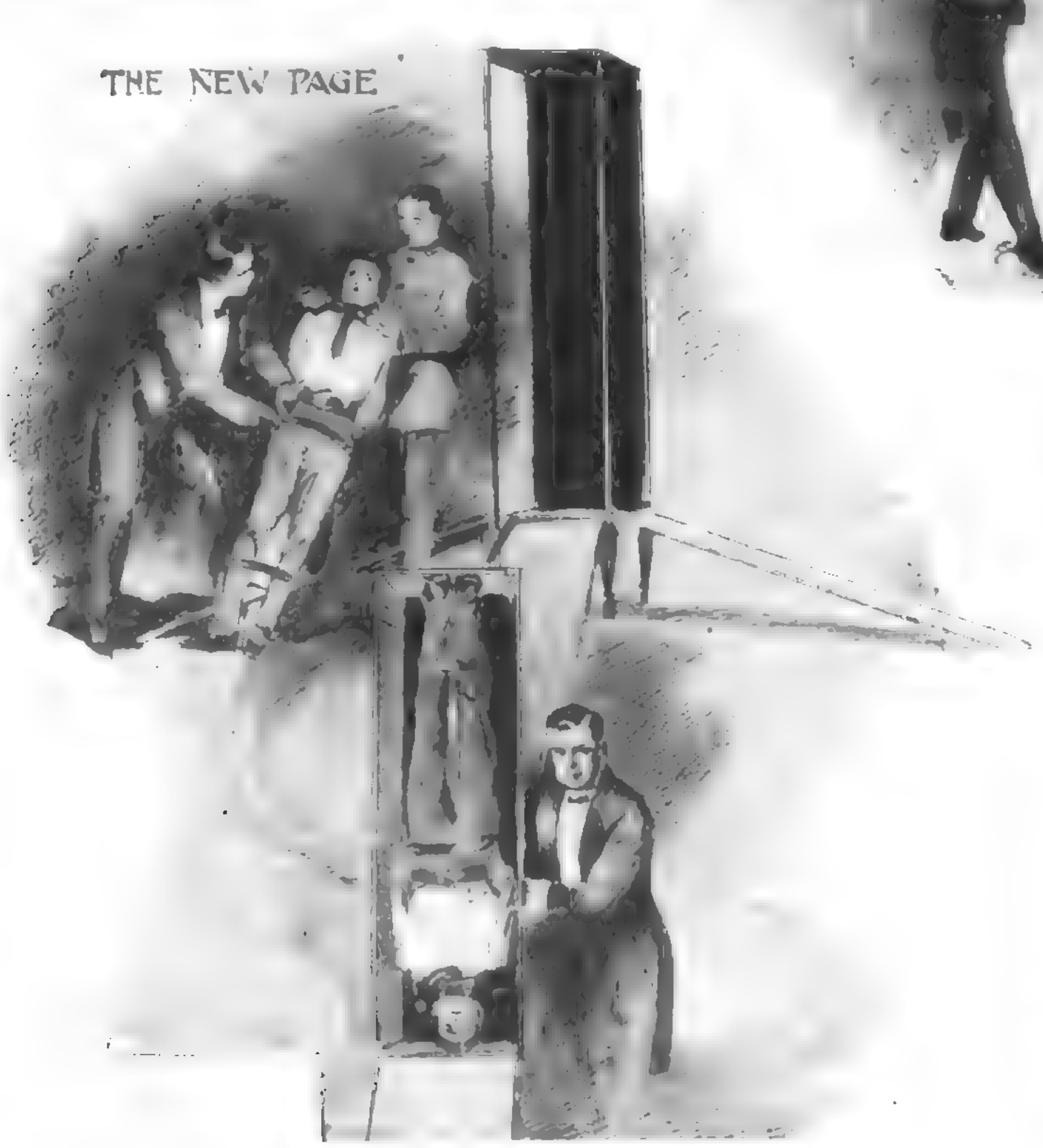
up in the centre of the stage and a lighted match put to it. Before the newspaper had burnt away it changed into a large white envelope, which opened, disclosing a valentine of the old-fashioned kind, but the figure in the valentine was alive.

My wife used to have a habit of turning my photograph upside down as a protest against a fit of bad temper on my part. One day, when we were laughing over this, I suggested that she would like to treat me in the same way. And then an idea came to me. I strapped a page-boy to a board, put him in a small cabinet, hung it up in the centre of the stage for a second, opened the doors, and there he was—still strapped to the board, but head downwards. This was quite a novel illusion, and we offered a prize of fifty pounds for the best title for it. "The New Page" was the prize-winning title.

Everyone has heard of the



THE INDIAN ROPE

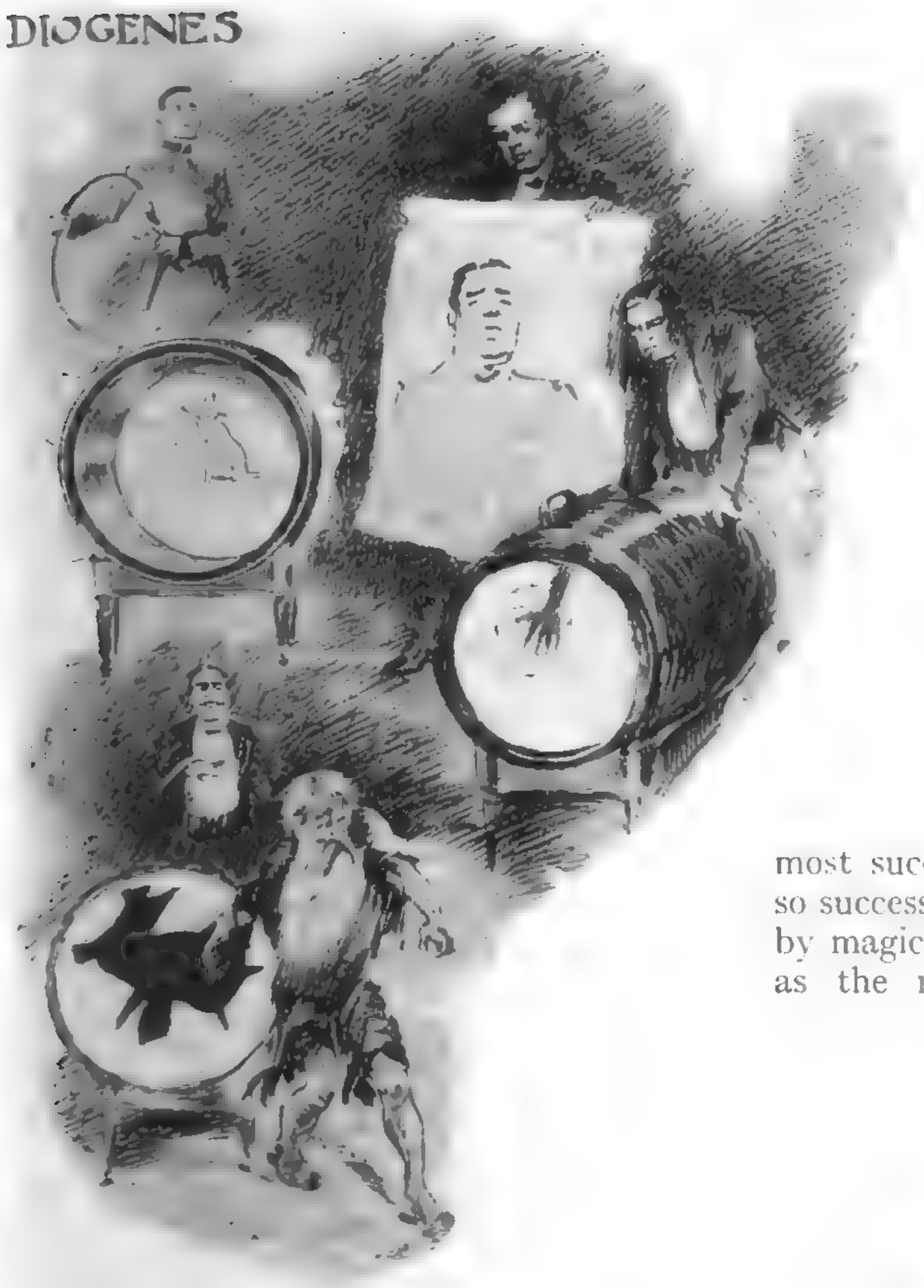


THE NEW PAGE

Indian Rope Trick, but how many people have ever seen it?

It is said that the magician throws a rope into the air, that it remains there rigid, that a boy climbs up the rope and disappears. Sometimes that story is embroidered with other fairy stories. We reproduced the trick on the stage of St. George's Hall, but with this slight difference. Owing to want of space we could not throw a rope in the air; it would have got

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entangled with our "flies." So we had the rope hanging from the "flies" at the beginning of the illusion. The Indian climbed up and duly disappeared in mid-air. Many people used to think at first that the Indian was an automaton, because he was magically produced from the pieces of a dummy which I threw into a flat basket; but, of course, long before the illusion was over it was obvious that the figure was that of a live man.

A little trick with a metal tube and a handkerchief, shown to me by my mechanician, Mr. Bate, suggested the illusion "Diogenes." Mr. Bate, by the way, has often helped me over a difficulty with a little practical advice, and I am glad of this opportunity of saying "Thank you!" to him in public. The effect of the handkerchief trick was as follows. The metal tube was closed at both ends with pieces of tissue-paper. The conjurer then had to make a hand-kerchief vanish, and he afterwards found it in the tube, although the ends were still closed with pieces of tissue-paper. I suggested to Mr. Bate that he should make this trick in a large size, using a man in place of the handkerchief and a bottomless tub in place of the metal tube. To make the illusion stronger than the original trick I devised an improvement. The paper with which I close up the ends of the tub can be marked by the audience, and thus everyone can see that the papers are neither changed nor broken. This improvement made a great difference to the effect of the illusion. Mr. Bate and I worked on this together, and it has been one of the most successful illusions in my repertoire—so successful, in fact, that it has been copied by magicians all over the world. However, as the right method has not been used,



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the best part of the illusion has never been reproduced.

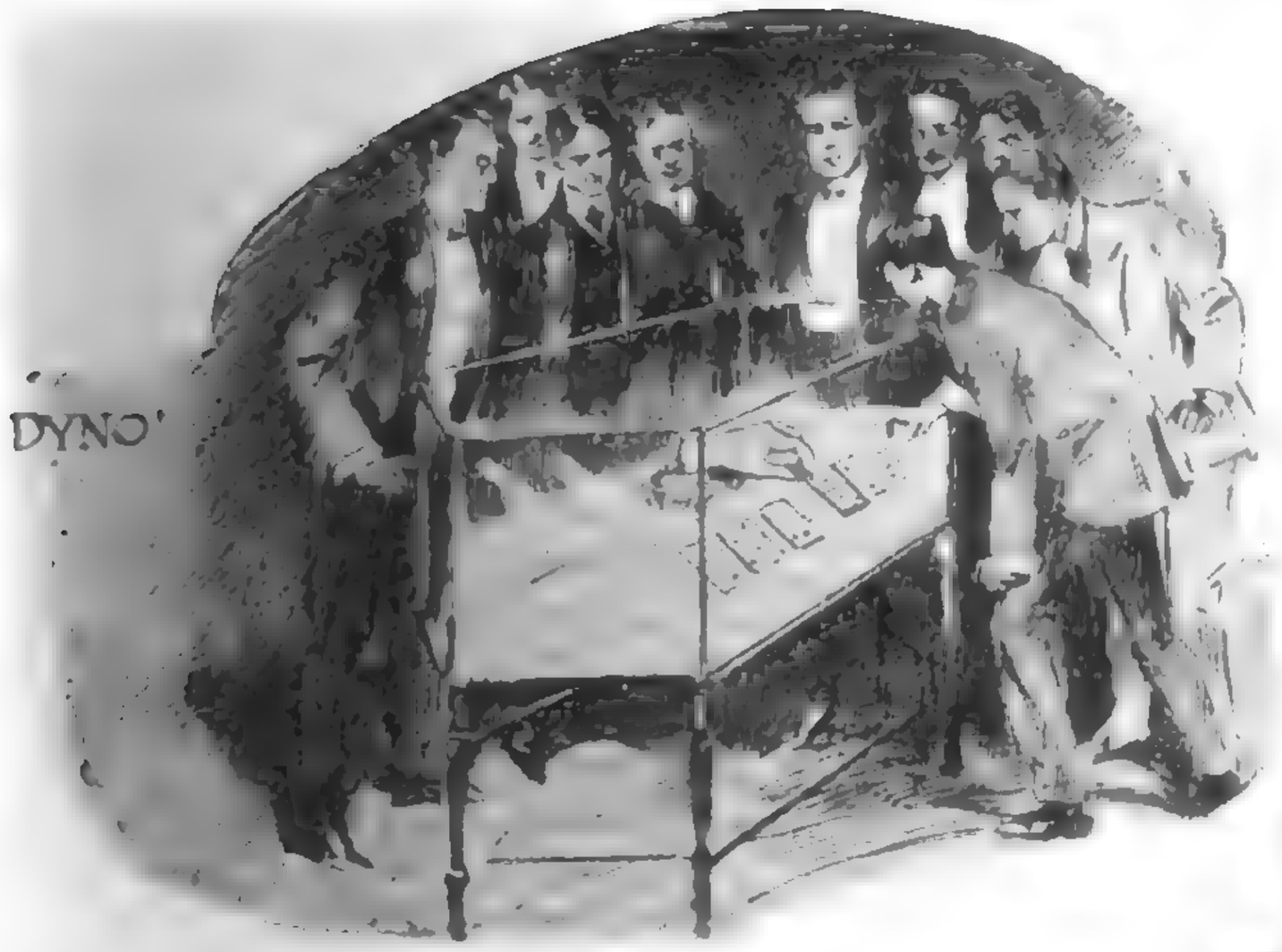
When the controversy about the discovery of the North Pole was going on I dressed up Diogenes as a *chef*—a joke was intended there—and brought him to the Arctic regions in St. George's Hall. He walked into a kind of cave, decorated with snow and icicles, and started to "discover" the North Pole. He usually accomplished this task in about half a minute, and while he stood there, clasping the icy Pole, he slowly changed into a large Polar bear with a card round his neck announcing that he was the actual discoverer of the Pole. For the device used in this illusion I was indebted to Mr. Walker, who at one time was a *confrère* of Professor Pepper.

On one occasion, during a six weeks' season in Vienna, I had to give the whole two hours' entertainment in German, and had one month in which to learn the language. As if that was not enough for me, I wanted to surprise my friends at home by bringing back with me an entirely new illusion. Mr. Bate and I put our heads together, and evolved an illusion which I called "The Giant's Breakfast." I drew a rough sketch of a giant's head, put it in a frame, and had it hung in the centre of the stage. Presently the sketch turned into a giant egg, and when this was lowered into an egg-cup and was cracked, a "human chicken" was hatched out of it. When I got home from Vienna the whole world was agog with M. Rostand's play, "Chantecler," and so, instead of drawing a picture of a giant's head, I sketched the head of M. Rostand, making it look like an egg, and tacked the rest of the illusion on to it.

I have to thank some light baths for the idea of the illusion which I called "The New Chocolate Soldier." In this a



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man, dressed up and made to resemble a soldier made of chocolate, is apparently melted down until he is only about a foot high, but still very much alive. The little figure was an automaton, made by Mr. Nevil Maskelyne, who has always been willing to collaborate with me in the production of new illusions. I owe him an immense debt of gratitude. Mr. Maskelyne had the training of an engineer; I had not. I am quite sure that if he were called upon to do so Mr. Maskelyne could make the whole of an illusion with his own hands, and I am afraid that if I tried to drive in one small nail I should probably bungle the job.

One day the elder Mr. Maskelyne, knowing my ignorance of mechanics, laughingly challenged me to produce something like "Psycho," his whist-playing automaton. In six weeks' time, although I was greatly handicapped by knowing nothing of mechanics, I was able to show Mr. Maskelyne "Dyno." A model of a hand was placed in a glass case. Members of the audience were invited to come on to the stage and play a game of dominoes with the hand, which moved about of its own accord and picked up each domino at the right time.

"The Mascot Moth" illusion, over which I spent some years of hard work, was the outcome of a dream. One night I got out of bed in my sleep, picked up a candle, and went through the action of catching a huge but quite imaginary moth. In the morning I told my dream to my wife, who surprised me by telling me that I had "acted" my dream. And then I started to wonder if I could make an illusion out of it.



THE MASCOT MOTH.

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Suppose a woman, dressed as a moth, came fluttering on to the stage, and suppose I went towards her with a candle, and when her wings touched the flame she disappeared as the moth of my dream had vanished—I did not know where. Suddenly I had an idea; I had thought of a way of doing it. It seemed quite simple to me, but when I went through it with Mr. Maskelyne he said that it was the trickiest thing he had ever seen, and he prophesied failure. The prophecy nearly came true. Many times, when I was experimenting with "The Mascot Moth," I wished I had dreamt of something else.

Some time ago I invented a trick called "Bogey Golf." A model of a putting green was stood on the stage, and members of the audience were invited to come up and try their skill. When I wished them to succeed they were able to putt—provided that they were ordinarily good players; but when I wished them to fail they could not putt a ball. In order that this trick could be seen easily by everyone in the audience, I had a large mirror made and placed in a stand near the putting green. Then it occurred to me to do something with that large mirror, and I thought of a tale that one of my property men once told me. He had been painting a large mask—a monkey's head—at his lodgings, and, wishing to see the effect of it, he slipped it over his head and looked at himself in the glass. At that moment his landlady, carrying a large tray of tea things, looked in at the door, saw the reflection of the monkey's head in the glass, screamed, and dropped the tray. She afterwards explained that she thought she had seen the devil. When a member of the audience looks into my magic mirror he sees other things beside the reflection of himself.

"The Window of the Haunted House" was invented in an unusual way. A new device



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for producing a vanishing person effect was brought to me by Mr. Julian Wylie, but I did not consider the effect novel enough, nor was it quite practicable for public presentation. So I had to set to work to think of an entirely new effect that would suit the device. This was reversing the usual plan of work, for the more simple process of getting an illusion had occurred to me. I thought I would put some screens on a large table, and produce within the enclosed space a fairy grotto, twinkling with lights. My grotto was to be inhabited by a real live fairy—that is to say, a lady who played the part of a fairy in the sketch of which the Magic Grotto formed a part. The fairy naturally sneered



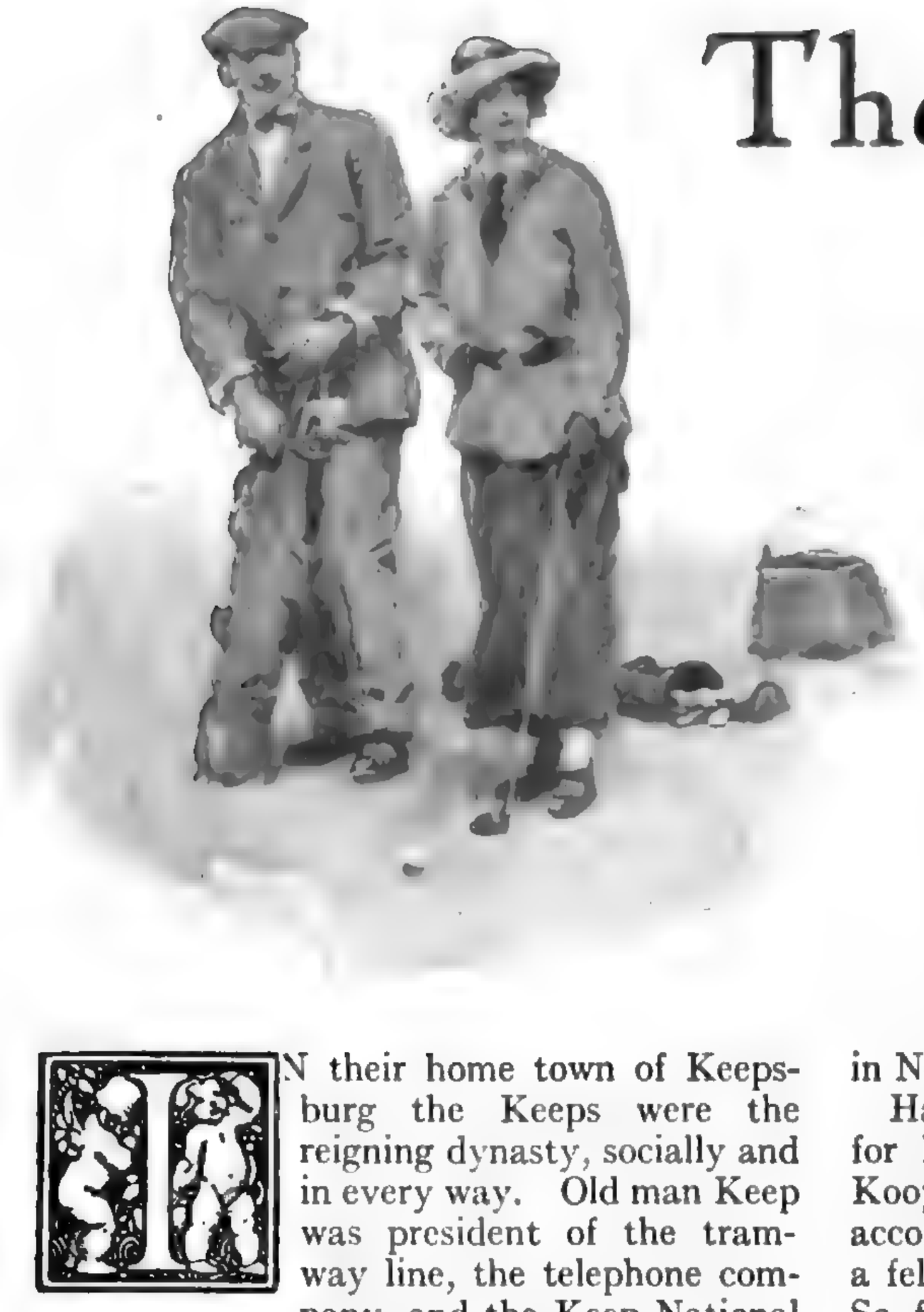
THE FAIRY GROTTO

an illusion consists in thinking of an effect and then casting about for some means of producing it.

A dinner-party suggested another illusion. I was dining at a nobleman's house which is celebrated for, among other things, the beauty of the table decorations. On this occasion they consisted of a kind of grotto, with fairy lights and flowers. Before we had reached the fourth course an idea for at everything which I, as a magician, did in the sketch.

Sometimes illusions are suggested by the authors who have written plays for St. George's Hall. The illusions in "The Magician's Heart," by E. Nesbit, in "A Fallen Idol," by Mr. Anstey, and in "All Souls' Eve," by the Marchioness Townshend, were all suggested by the authors of those plays.

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The Man in Canvas.

By RICHARD HARDING DAVIS.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

IN their home town of Keepsburg the Keeps were the reigning dynasty, socially and in every way. Old man Keep was president of the tramway line, the telephone company, and the Keep National Bank. But Fred, his son, and the heir apparent, did not inherit the business ability of his father; or, if he did, he took pains to conceal that fact.

When Fred arranged an alliance with Winnie Platt, who also was of the innermost inner set of Keepsburg, everybody said Keepsburg would soon lose them. And everybody was right. When single, each had sighed for other social worlds to conquer, and when they combined their fortunes and ambitions they found Keepsburg impossible, and they left it to lay siege to New York.

The point from which the Keeps elected to launch their attack was Scarboro-on-the-Hudson. They selected Scarboro because both of them could play golf, and they planned that their first skirmish should be fought and won upon the golf-links of the Sleepy Hollow Country Club. But the attack did not succeed. Something went wrong. They knew no one, and no one knew them. That is, they did not know the Van Wardens; and if you lived at Scarboro and were not recognized by the Van Wardens, you were not to be found on any map.

Since the days of Hendrik Hudson the country seat of the Van Wardens had looked down upon the river that bears his name, and ever since those days the Van Wardens had looked down upon everybody else—except "Harry" Van Warden, and he lived in New York at the Turf Club.

Harry, according to all local tradition—for he frequently motored out to Warden Koopf, the Van Warden country seat—and according to the newspapers, was a devil of a fellow, and in no sense cold or unsociable. So far as the Keeps read of him, he was always being arrested for overspeeding, or breaking his collar-bone out hunting, or losing his front teeth at polo.

"If *you* would only play polo or ride to hounds, instead of playing golf," sighed Winnie Keep to her husband, "you would meet Harry Van Warden, and he'd introduce you to his sisters, and then we could break in anywhere."

"If I was to ride to hounds," returned her husband, "the only thing I'd break would be my neck."

The country place of the Keeps was completely satisfactory. The house was one they had rented from a man of charming taste and inflated fortune; and with it they had taken over his well-disciplined butler, his pictures, furniture, family silver, and linen. It stood upon an eminence, was heavily wooded, and surrounded by many gardens; but its chief attraction was an artificial lake well stocked with trout, that lay directly below the terrace of the house, and also in full view from the road to Albany.

This latter fact caused Winnie Keep much concern. In the neighbourhood were many Italian labourers, and on several nights

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the fish had tempted these born poachers to trespass.

"It makes me nervous," complained Winnie. "I don't like the idea of people prowling around so near the house. And think of those twelve hundred convicts, not one mile away, in Sing Sing. Most of them are burglars, and if they ever get out our house is the very first one they'll break into."

"I haven't caught anybody in this neighbourhood breaking into our house yet," said Fred, "and I'd be glad to see even a burglar!"

They were seated on the brick terrace that overlooked the lake. It was just before the dinner hour, and the dusk of a wonderful October night had fallen on the hedges, the clumps of evergreens, the rows of close-clipped box. A full moon was just showing itself above the tree-tops, turning the lake into moving silver. Fred rose from his wicker chair and, crossing to his young bride, touched her hair with the tips of his fingers.

"What if we don't know anybody, Win," he said, "and nobody knows us? It's been a perfectly good honeymoon, hasn't it? If you just look at it that way, it works out all right. We came here really for our honeymoon, to be together, to be alone——"

Winnie laughed shortly. "They certainly have left us alone!" she sighed.

"But where else could we have been any happier?" demanded the young husband, loyally. "Where will you find any prettier place than this, just as it is at this minute, so still and sweet and silent? There's nothing the matter with that moon, is there? Nothing the matter with the lake? Where's there a better place for a honeymoon? It's a bower—a bower of peace, solitude—a bower of——"

As though mocking his words, there burst upon the sleeping countryside the shriek of a giant siren. It was raucous, virulent, insulting. It came as sharply as a scream of terror, it continued in a bellow of rage. Then, as suddenly as it had cried aloud, it sank to silence; only after a pause of an instant, as though giving a signal, to shriek again in two sharp blasts. And then again it broke into the hideous, long-drawn scream of rage, insistent, breathless, commanding; filling the soul of him who heard it, even of the innocent, with alarm.

"In the name of Heaven!" gasped Keep, "what's that?"

Down the terrace the butler was hastening towards them. When he stopped he spoke as though he were announcing dinner. "A convict, sir," he said, "has escaped from Sing Sing. I thought you might not understand the whistle, and that perhaps you would wish Mrs. Keep to come indoors."

"Why?" asked Winnie Keep.

"The house is near the road, madam," said the butler. "And there are so many trees and bushes. Last summer two of them hid here, and the keepers—there was a fight."

The man glanced at Keep. Fred touched his wife on the arm.

"It's time to dress for dinner, Win," he said.

"And what are you going to do?" demanded Winnie.

"I'm going to finish this cigar first. It doesn't take me long to change." He turned to the butler. "And I'll have a cocktail, too. I'll have it out here."

The servant left them, but in the French window that opened from the terrace to the library Mrs. Keep lingered irresolutely. "Fred," she begged, "you—you're not going to poke around in the bushes, are you—just because you think I'm frightened?"

Her husband laughed at her. "I certainly am *not*," he said. "And you're not frightened, either. Go in. I'll be with you in a minute."

But the girl hesitated. Still shattering the silence of the night, the siren shrieked relentlessly; it seemed to be at their very door, to beat and buffet the window-panes. The bride shivered and held her fingers to her ears.

"Why don't they stop it!" she whispered. "Why don't they give him a chance!"

When she had gone Fred pulled one of the wicker chairs to the edge of the terrace, and, leaning forward with his chin in his hands, sat staring down at the lake. The moon had cleared the tops of the trees, had blotted the lawns with black, rigid squares, had disguised the hedges with wavering shadows. Somewhere near at hand a criminal—a murderer, burglar—was at large, and the voice of the prison he had tricked still bellowed in rage, in amazement, still clamoured not only for his person, but perhaps for his life. The whole countryside heard it; the farmers bedding down their cattle for the night; the guests of the Briar Cliff Inn, dining under red candle-shades; the "joy-riders" from the city, racing their cars along the Albany road. It woke the echoes in Sleepy Hollow. It crossed the Hudson. The granite walls of the Palisades flung it back against the granite walls of the prison. Whichever way the convict turned, it hunted him, reaching for him, pointing him out—stirring in the heart of each who heard it the lust of the hunter,

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which never is so cruel as when the hunted thing is a man.

"Find him!" shrieked the siren. "Find him! He's there, behind your hedge! He's kneeling by the stone wall. *That's* he running in the moonlight. *That's* he crawling through the dead leaves! Stop him! Drag him down! He's mine! Mine!"

But from within the prison, from within the grey walls that made the home of the siren, each of twelve hundred men cursed it with his soul. Each clinging to the bars of his cell, each trembling with a fearful joy; each, his thumbs up, urging on with all the strength of his will the hunted, rat-like figure that stumbled panting through the crisp October night, bewildered by strange lights, beset by shadows, staggering and falling, running like a mad dog in circles, knowing that wherever his feet led him the siren still held him by the heels.

As a rule, when Winnie Keep was dressing for dinner Fred, in the room adjoining, could hear her unconsciously and light-heartedly singing to herself. It was a habit of hers that he loved. But on this night, although her room was directly above where he sat upon the terrace, he heard no singing. He had been on the terrace for a quarter of an hour. Gridley, the aged butler who was rented with the house, and who for twenty years had been an inmate of it, had brought the cocktail and taken away the empty glass. And Keep had been alone with his thoughts. They were entirely of the convict. If the man suddenly confronted him and begged his aid, what would he do? He knew quite well what he would do. He considered even the means by which he would assist the fugitive to a successful get-away.

The ethics of the question did not concern Fred. He did not weigh his duty to the State of New York or to society. One day, when he had visited "the institution," as a somewhat sensitive neighbourhood prefers to speak of it, he was told that the chance of a prisoner's escaping from Sing Sing and not being at once retaken was one out of six thousand. So with Fred it was largely a sporting proposition. Any man who could beat a six-thousand-to-one shot commanded his admiration.

And, having settled his own course of action, he tried to imagine himself in the place of the man who at that very moment was endeavouring to escape. Were he that man, he would first, he decided, rid himself of his tell-tale clothing. But a man without clothes would be quite as conspicuous as one in the purple-grey cloth of the prison. How could he obtain clothes? He might hold up a passer-by, and, if the passer-by did not flee from him or punch him into insensibility, he might effect an exchange of garments; he might by threats obtain them from some farmer; he might despoil a scarecrow.

But with none of these plans was Fred entirely satisfied. The question deeply perplexed him. How best could a naked man clothe himself? And as he sat pondering that point, from the bushes a naked man emerged. He was not entirely undraped, for around him he had drawn a canvas awning. Fred recognized it as having been torn from one of the rowboats on the lake. But, except for that, the man was bare to his heels. He was a young man of Fred's own age. His hair was cut close, his face smooth-shaven, and above his eye was a half-healed bruise. He had the sharp, clever, rat-like face of one who lived by evil knowledge. Water dripped from him, and, either for that reason or from fright, the young man trembled and, like one who had been running, breathed in short, hard gasps.

Fred was astonished to find that he was not in the least surprised. It was as though he had been waiting for the man, as though it had been an appointment.

Two thoughts alone concerned him: that before he could rid himself of his visitor his wife might return and take alarm, and that the man, not knowing his friendly intentions, and in a state to commit murder, might rush him. But the stranger made no hostile move, and for a moment in the moonlight the two young men eyed each other warily.

Then, taking breath, and with a violent effort to stop the chattering of his teeth, the stranger launched into his story.

"I took a bath in your pond," he blurted forth, "and—and they stole my clothes! That's why I'm like this."

Fred was consumed with envy. In comparison with this ingenious narrative, how prosaic and commonplace became his own plans to rid himself of accusing garments and explain their absence. He regarded the stranger with admiration. But, even though he applauded the other's invention, he could not let him suppose that he was deceived by it.

"Isn't it rather a cold night to take a bath?" he said.

As though in hearty agreement, the man burst into a violent fit of shivering.

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"It wasn't a bath," he gasped. "It was a bet!"

"A what?" exclaimed Fred. His admiration was increasing. "A bet? Then you are not alone?"

"I am *now*—confound them!" exclaimed the canvas-clothed one. He began again reluctantly. "We saw you from the road, you and a woman sitting here in the light from that room. They bet me I didn't dare strip and swim across your pond with you sitting so near. I can see now it was framed up on me from the start. For when I was swimming back I saw them run to where I'd left my clothes, and then I heard them crank up, and when I got to the hedge the car was gone!"

Keep smiled encouragingly. "The car!" he assented. "So you've been riding in the moonlight."

The other nodded, and was about to speak when there burst in upon them the roaring scream of the siren. The note now was of deeper rage, and came in greater volume. Between his clenched teeth the stranger cursed fiercely, and then, as though to avoid further questions, burst into a fit of coughing. Trembling and shaking, he drew the canvas cloak closer to him. But at no time did his anxious, prying eyes leave those of Keep.



"'I TOOK A BATH IN YOUR POND,' HE BLURTED FORTH, 'AND—AND THEY STOLE MY CLOTHES!'"

"You—you couldn't lend me a suit of clothes, could you?" he stuttered. "Just for to-night? I'll send them back. It's all right," he added, reassuringly. "I live near here."

With a start Keep raised his eyes, and, distressed by his look, the young man continued less confidently.

"I don't blame you if you don't believe it," he stammered, "seeing me like this; but I *do* live quite near here. Everybody

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around here knows me, and I guess you've read about me in the papers, too. I'm—, that is, my name——" Like one about to take a plunge, he drew a short breath, and the rat-like eyes regarded Keep watchfully. "My name is Van Warden. I'm the one you read about—Harry; I'm Harry Van Warden!"

After a pause, slowly and reprovingly Fred shook his head; but his smile was kindly, even regretful, as though he were sorry he could not longer enjoy the stranger's confidences.

"My boy," he exclaimed, "you're *more* than Van Warden! You're a genius!" He rose and made a peremptory gesture. "Sorry," he said, "but this isn't safe for either of us. Follow me, and I'll dress you up and send you where you want to go." He turned and whispered over his shoulder: "Some day let me hear from you. A man with your nerve——"

In alarm the other, with a gesture, commanded silence.

The library led to the front hall. In this was the coat-room. First making sure the library and hall were free of servants, Fred tiptoed to the coat-room and, opening the door, switched on the electric light. The canvas-clad man, leaving in his wake a trail of damp footprints, followed close at his heels.

Fred pointed at golf-capes, sweaters, great-coats hanging from hooks, and on the floor at boots and overshoes.

"Put on that motor-coat and the goloshes," he commanded. "They'll cover you in case you have to run for it. I'm going to leave you here while I get you some clothes. If any of the servants butt in, don't lose your head. Just say you're waiting to see me—Mr. Keep. I won't be long. Wait."

"Wait!" snorted the stranger. "You *bet* I'll wait!"

As Fred closed the door upon him the stranger was rubbing himself violently with Mrs. Keep's yellow golf-jacket.

In his own room Fred collected a suit of blue serge, a tennis shirt, boots, even a tie. Underclothes he found ready laid out for him, and he snatched them from the bed. From a roll of money in his bureau-drawer he counted out a hundred dollars. Tactfully he slipped the money in the trousers-pocket of the serge suit, and with the bundle of clothes in his arms raced downstairs and shoved them into the coat-room.

"Don't come out until I knock," he commanded. "And," he added, in a vehement whisper, "don't come out at all unless you have clothes on!"

The stranger grunted.

Fred rang for Gridley and told him to have his car brought round to the door. He wanted it to start at once—within two minutes. When the butler had departed Fred, by an inch, again opened the coat-room door. The stranger had draped himself in the underclothes and the shirt, and at the moment was carefully arranging the tie.

"Hurry!" commanded Keep. "The car'll be here in a minute. Where shall I tell him to take you?"

The stranger chuckled excitedly; his confidence seemed to be returning. "New York," he whispered, "fast as he can get there! Look here," he added, doubtfully, "there's a roll of bills in these clothes."

"They're yours," said Fred.

The stranger exclaimed vigorously. "You're all right!" he whispered. "I won't forget this, or you either. I'll send the money back same time I send the clothes."

"Exactly!" said Fred.

The wheels of the touring-car crunched on the gravel drive, and Fred slammed the door to, and like a sentry on guard paced before it. After a period which seemed to stretch over many minutes there came from the inside a cautious knocking. With equal caution Fred opened the door the width of a finger and put his ear to the crack.

"You couldn't find me a button-hook, could you?" whispered the stranger.

Indignantly Fred shut the door and, walking to the veranda, hailed the chauffeur. James, the chauffeur, was a Keepsburg boy, and when Keep had gone to college James had accompanied him. Keep knew the boy could be trusted.

"You're to take a man to New York," he said, "or wherever he wants to go. Don't talk to him. Don't ask any questions. So, if *you're* questioned, you can say you know nothing. That's for your own good."

The chauffeur mechanically touched his cap and started down the steps. As he did so the prison whistle, still unsatisfied, still demanding its prey, shattered the silence. As though it had hit him a physical blow, the youth jumped. He turned and lifted startled, inquiring eyes to where Keep stood above him.

"I told you," said Keep, "to ask no questions."

As Fred re-entered the hall Winnie Keep was coming down the stairs towards him.

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"HE STOOD STILL, GAZING, GAPING, DEVOURING WINNIE WITH HIS EYES."

She had changed to one of the prettiest evening gowns of her trousseau, and so outrageously lovely was the combination of herself and the gown that her husband's excitement and anxiety fell from him, and he was lost in admiration. But he was not for long lost. To his horror, the door of the coat-room opened towards his wife and out of the room the stranger emerged. Winnie, not accustomed to seeing young men suddenly appear from among the dust-coats, uttered a sharp shriek.

With what he considered great presence of mind, Fred swung upon the visitor.

"Did you manage it?" he demanded.

The visitor did not heed him. In amazement, in abject admiration, his eyes were fastened upon the beautiful and radiant vision presented by Winnie Keep. But he also still preserved sufficient presence of mind to nod his head dully.

"Come," commanded Fred. "The car is waiting."

Still the stranger did not move. As though he had never before seen a woman, as though her dazzling loveliness held him in a trance, he stood still, gazing, gaping, devouring Winnie with his eyes. In her turn, Winnie beheld a strange youth who looked like a groom out of livery, so overcome by her mere presence as to be struck motionless and inarticulate. For protection she moved in some alarm towards her husband.

The stranger gave a sudden jerk of his

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body that might have been intended for a bow. Before Keep could interrupt him, like a parrot reciting its lesson he exclaimed explosively :—

"My name's Van Warden. I'm Harry Van Warden."

He seemed as little convinced of the truth of his statement as though he had announced that he was the Czar of Russia. It was as if a stage-manager had drilled him in the lines.

But upon Winnie, as her husband saw to his dismay, the words had produced an instant and appalling effect. She fairly radiated excitement and delight. How her husband had succeeded in capturing the social prize of Scarboro she could not imagine, but, for doing so, she flashed towards him a glance of deep and grateful devotion.

Then she beamed upon the stranger. "Won't Mr. Van Warden stay to dinner?" she asked.

Her husband emitted a howl. "He will *not!*" he cried. "He's not that kind of a Van Warden. He's a plumber. He's the man that fixes the telephone!"

He seized the visitor by the sleeve of the long motor-coat and dragged him down the steps. Reluctantly, almost resistingly, the visitor stumbled after him, casting backward amazed glances at the beautiful lady. Fred thrust him into the seat beside the chauffeur. Pointing at the golf-cap and automobile goggles which the stranger was stupidly twisting in his hands, Fred whispered, fiercely :—

"Put those on! Cover your face! Don't speak! The man knows what to do."

With eager eyes and parted lips, James the chauffeur was waiting for the signal. Fred nodded sharply, and the chauffeur stooped to throw in the clutch. But the car did not start. From the hedge beside the driveway, directly in front of the wheels, something on all fours threw itself upon the gravel. Something in a suit of purple-grey; something torn and bleeding, smeared with sweat and dirt; something that cringed and crawled, that tried to rise and sank back upon its knees, lifting to the glare of the headlights the white face and white hair of a very old, old man. The kneeling figure sobbed; the sobs rising from far down in the pit of the stomach, wrenching the body like waves of nausea. The man stretched his arms towards them. From long disuse his voice cracked and broke.

"I'm done!" he sobbed. "I can't go no farther! I give myself up!"

Above the awful silence that held the four young people the prison siren shrieked in one long, mocking howl of triumph.

It was the stranger who was the first to act. Pushing past Fred, and slipping from his own shoulders the long motor-coat, he flung it over the suit of purple-grey. The goggles he clapped upon the old man's frightened eyes, the golf-cap he pulled down over the white hair. With one arm he lifted the convict, and with the other dragged and pushed him into the seat beside the chauffeur. Into the hands of James he thrust the money.

"Get him away!" he ordered. "It's only twelve miles to the Connecticut line. As soon as you're across buy him clothes and a ticket to Boston. Go through White Plains to Greenwich—and then you're safe!"

As though suddenly remembering the presence of the owner of the car, he swung upon Fred. "Am I right?" he demanded.

"Of course!" roared Fred. He flung his arm at the chauffeur as though throwing him into space.

"Get out of here!" he shouted.

The chauffeur, by profession a criminal but by birth a human being, chuckled savagely, and this time threw in the clutch. With a grinding of gravel the racing-car leaped into the night, its ruby rear lamp winking in farewell, its tiny siren answering the great siren of the prison in jeering notes of joy and victory.

Fred had supposed that at the last moment the younger convict purposed to leap to the running-board, but instead the stranger remained motionless.

Fred shouted impotently after the flying car. In dismay he seized the stranger by the arm.

"But you?" he demanded. "How are you going to get away?"

The stranger turned appealingly to where, upon the upper step, stood Winnie Keep.

"I don't want to get away," he said. "I was hoping, maybe, you'd let me stay to dinner."

A terrible and icy chill crept down the spine of Fred Keep. He moved so that the light from the hall fell full upon the face of the stranger.

"Will you kindly tell me," Fred demanded, "who the deuce you are?"

The stranger exclaimed peevishly. "I've *been* telling you all evening," he protested. "I'm Harry Van Warden!"

Gridley, the ancient butler, appeared in the open door.

"Dinner is served, madam," he said.

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The stranger gave an exclamation of pleasure. "Halloa, Gridley!" he cried. "Will you please tell Mr. Keep who I am? Tell him if he'll ask me to dinner I won't steal the spoons."

Upon the face of Gridley appeared a smile it never had been the privilege of Fred Keep to behold. The butler beamed upon the stranger fondly, proudly, by the right of long acquaintanceship, with the affection of an old friend. Still beaming, he bowed to Keep.

"If Mr. Harry—Mr. Van Warden," he said, "is to stay to dinner, might I suggest, sir, he is very partial to the Paul Vibert '84?"

Fred Keep gazed stupidly from his butler to the stranger and then at his wife. She was again radiantly beautiful and smilingly happy.

Gridley coughed tentatively. "Shall I open a bottle, sir?" he asked.

Hopelessly Fred tossed his arms heavenward.

"Open a *case!*" he roared.

At ten o'clock, when they were still at table and reaching a state of such mutual appreciation that soon they would be calling each other by their first names, Gridley brought in a written message he had taken from the telephone. It was a long-distance call from Yonkers, sent by James, the faithful chauffeur.

Fred read it aloud.

"I got that party the articles he needed," it read, "and saw him safe on a train to Boston. On the way back I got pinched for speeding the car on the way down. Please send money. I am in a cell in Yonkers."



"'I'M DONE!' HE SOBBED. 'I CAN'T GO NO FARTHER. I GIVE MYSELF UP.'"

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My Reminiscences of "Peter Pan."

By PAULINE CHASE.



Photographs by Ellis & Walery, and others.

IT is a very curious fact that when Mr. J. M. Barrie imbued Peter Pan with everlasting youth, by some strange gift of magic he also bestowed upon those fortunate enough to be destined to play the part of "the boy who wouldn't grow up" an everlasting enthusiasm for the *rôle*, and, personally speaking, although I have been Peter Pan on over a thousand occasions, I feel to-day even more in love with my part than when I attended the first rehearsal, which was—it's wonderful how time flies, isn't it?—actually just over seven years ago.

I often wonder what I should have been doing to-day had I not been selected to play Peter. Somehow or other, I have grown so fond of the part that it has seemed to become like a big bit of myself—in fact, to-day I really cannot imagine December, January, and February coming round without my being summoned to become a boy once more. Curiously enough, it was through illness that the great chance of my theatrical career turned up. It happened in this way. Seven long years ago I was understudying Miss Cecilia Loftus, who was then playing Peter Pan. One afternoon, however, Miss Loftus caught a severe chill, and wired to the theatre that she would be unable to play the part that night.

Naturally enough, the management was tremendously perturbed. In the first place, no one knew where to find me, and so throughout the afternoon telephone messages were

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sent here, there, and everywhere in Edinburgh, where the company was then appearing, until eventually I was discovered — buying ribbons, if I remember rightly. The news that I was to play Peter at first literally terrified me, for I realized that I was about to take part in "an awfully big adventure." Still, I just clenched my teeth, and hoped for the best.

Just before I was going on the stage a certain member of the company stopped me in the wings and said :—

"Would you feel more nervous than ever if Mr. Barrie chánced to be sitting in front ?"

"Good heavens !" I said, growing pale through my make-up at the thought. "If Mr. Barrie were to be in front I think I should faint with sheer fright."

"Well, you'll be saved that unpleasant experience," was the reply, "because he can't possibly have had time to travel from London to Edinburgh."

So for the moment I felt reassured; for, you must know, to take up the leading part in the play at a few minutes' notice is an ordeal which the most experienced actress would regard as terrifying in the extreme.



"MR. BARRIE CONGRATULATED ME MOST HEARTILY."

But, like Peter Pan himself, Mr. Barrie would seem to possess the secret recipe for the manufacture of "flying powder," for, wonderful to relate, he *was* in front that night, sitting in a box. And, as I felt at the time, still more wonderful to relate, at the end of the performance he came round to my dressing-room, congratulated me most heartily on my humble efforts, and there and then engaged me to play the part of Peter Pan in London on the following Christmas, and—well, to cut a long story short, I have been Peter Pan ever since; and, from the never-failing popularity of the play, all being well, it would seem that I am likely to be Peter Pan for many years to come.

And now let me tell you about



THE ARRIVAL OF PETER PAN.

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some of my behind-the-scenes reminiscences of this hardy and ever-youthful annual. First of all, I would point out that all sorts of things happen in "Peter Pan" which never happen in any other play. Thus every December a terrifying ceremony takes place, and this is the measuring of the children who play in it. They are measured to see whether they have grown too tall, and they can all squeeze down into about two inches less than they really are; but this does not deceive the management, who have grown frightfully knowing, and sometimes they frown horribly at you and say, sternly, "We shall pass you this year, but take care, madam, take care!" And sometimes you are told, "It won't do, my lad; you've grown out of knowledge. We are sorry for you, but—farewell!" Yes, measuring day is one of the tragedies of "Peter Pan."



"MEASURING DAY IS ONE OF THE TRAGEDIES OF 'PETER PAN.'"

I wonder, by the way, whether any other actors and actresses have ever received quite so many letters as the artistes who appear in this play? I scarcely think it possible, for, if weighed, the letters sent to me would register tons and tons. We all get these letters; I'm sure Wendy could paper her room with hers, and Smee also has a large number. Wendy and I are sometimes rather jealous of Smee, who is surely the best-loved of wicked people. He says scarcely a word in the play of which he ought not to be ashamed, and he makes (or thinks he makes) the most horrifying faces. But this does not in the least affect the love of children for him; they seem to regard him as a dear, misguided creature whose heart is in the right place, whatever he says or does, and they write daily asking him to come to tea and bring the sewing-machine. They would let him cut them up with his pirate knife with perfect confidence.

Captain Hook is the one who makes them hold their breath. We hear the shudder of them when he announces that he is to do for us with poisoned cakes, and we hear gasps, too, and wriggles, as if someone wanted to get nearer his mamma, and we see, perhaps, a box suddenly look empty, because the occupants are now hiding in the back of it. But soon they creep into view again, because of a rumour that Peter is getting the better of Hook, and they shout out advice to me about where to hit him, and are uproariously triumphant when I win, the reason for this (as I have discovered) being not so much anxiety about me as a firm conviction — in every one of the boys, at all events — that he is Peter. You never, never, never can tell how the awful villainy of Hook will affect children.

Their fear is very often pretence, which heightens their enjoyment, and the ones whom he made scream may afterwards tell their puzzled parents that they liked him best of all. They may also tell it to us, for they shout out their thoughts to us across the footlights, addressing us by name with pleasing frankness. "Don't believe him, Peter!" they cry. "Peter, look out; he's coming down the tree!" Or, "How are you, Wendy? I'm here to-day." Or (agreeable to the box-office), "I say, Slightly, I'm coming every day when I'm a man."

I know of one little girl whose mother expected to have to comfort her in the agony scene, when Hook puts his head in at the door and glares at Peter asleep. This is the moment that curdles their blood most. But she was not dismayed. "I do love that man," she called out, so loudly that we all heard her. No, you never can tell how they will take it. Hook has a soliloquy on the pirate ship, "No little children love me," and stern voices in front have been heard calling

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out in reply, "Serves you right." But all are not so hard-hearted. I remember two mites being brought round behind the scenes, because they had something they wanted to say to Captain Hook; but awe fell upon them when he shook their hands—with his hook—and they could only stare at him and say not a word. When he had gone, however, they looked very woeful, and kept repeating, "We wanted to tell him—we wanted to tell him!" and they explained to me that what they wanted to tell him was that they loved him.

But if the children in the audience love Hook very dearly, I somehow don't think they can possibly be as fond of him as is Mr. Barrie of the children who play in "Peter." Mr. Barrie seems to take a fatherly interest in each and every child, and to see him telling them stories, asking them riddles, and sometimes arranging tea-parties for them, would, I am sure, make even the most world-weary, tired, *blasé* man or woman of the world feel a child once again.

Mr. Barrie, I must tell you, is awfully fond of giving the children — he appears to include me in the list—puzzles to do and riddles to answer. Personally, I'm the greatest dunce in the world at both puzzles and riddles, and never guess the right answer; but some of the other "children" are ever so much sharper, and even if they don't happen to light upon the correct "booky" solution, they at least provide replies which possess the merit of being distinctly convincing.

Thus, one afternoon last year, Mr. Barrie was talking to a tiny mite who was standing looking very forlorn, waiting to go on the stage. After asking her name, age, and so on and so forth, he said:—

"Do you like riddles?"

"I loves 'em," said the child, her big blue eyes growing bigger in the delightful expectation of having a riddle to answer.

"Then I wonder if you can tell me why a miller wears a white hat?" said Mr. Barrie, smilingly, evidently having decided to give the tiny tot an easy one to commence with.

The child thought for a moment, with puckered brows. Then she replied, excitedly:—

"In course I do."

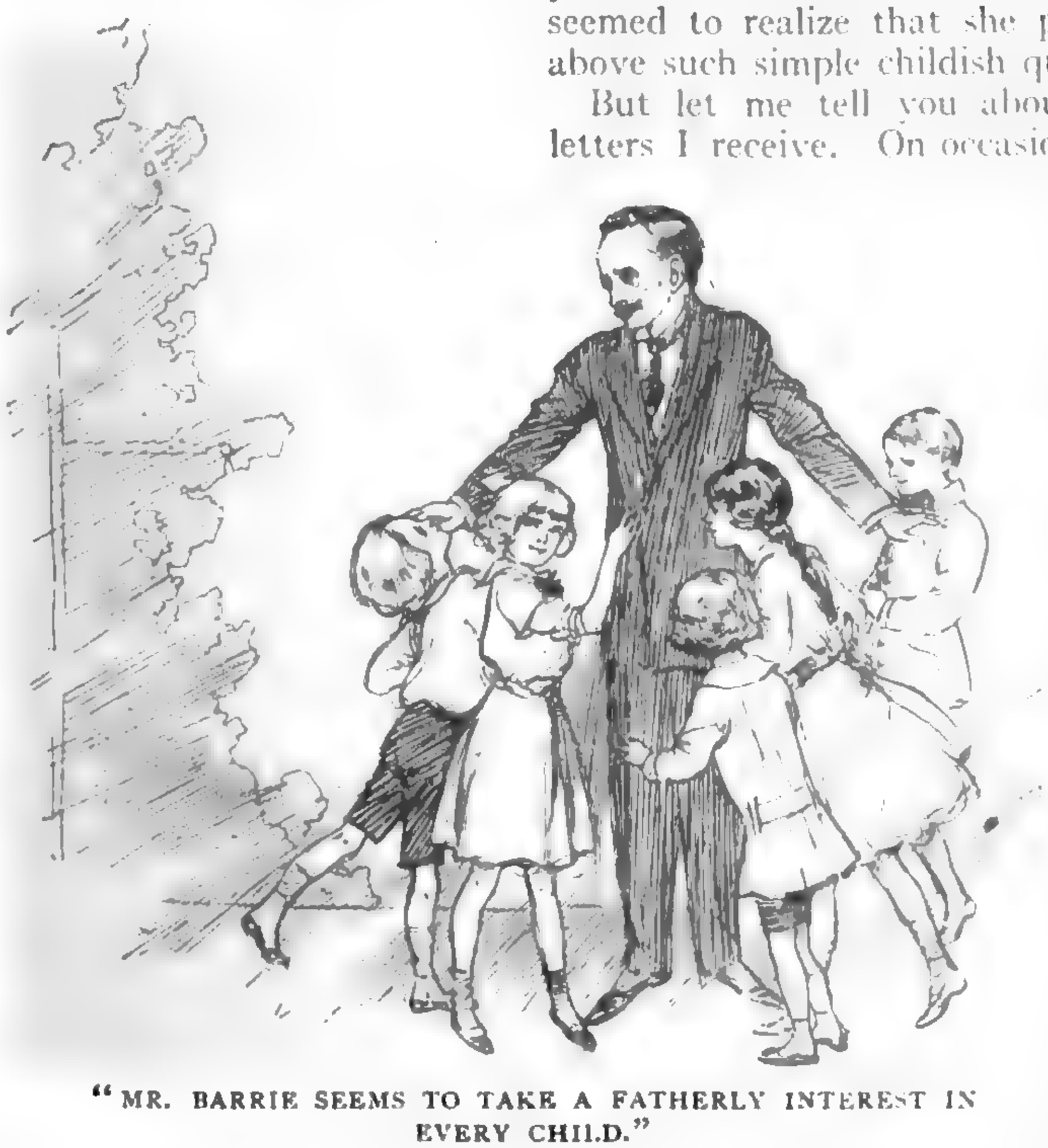
"Why?" said Mr. Barrie.

"'Cos the man who sells hats had sold out of all other colours," she replied, decisively.

And who will dare say that her information was wrong? Between ourselves, I may tell you that I don't think Mr. Barrie has ever put another conundrum to that child, for he seemed to realize that she possessed a soul above such simple childish queries.

But let me tell you about some of the letters I receive. On occasions the postman has delivered as many as over a hundred at one post, of which the following is a typical specimen:—

"DEAR PETER PAN,—I came to see you act on Feb. 1st, and I liked it so much. I and my sister and my Nanna came. I would like to have a dog for my nurse, do you get much money for acting I would like to be mickle (Michael) and the crocodile, how is Tinker Bell and the Pirretts, and are they quite well and the dog. please give my love to them all please are you a girl or a boy I am a little boy of seven years old and I will be 8 in May and my sister is 5 and she will be 6 in May 14th and my birthday is on May 27th and my papa's is on June



"MR. BARRIE SEEMS TO TAKE A FATHERLY INTEREST IN EVERY CHILD."

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17th and my mama's is on June the 10th. Will you come and see us, and show us how to fly from your loving AUGUSTUS HUGH ——.

"I would like to fly so much, and I would show other people how to."

This young gentleman should grow up a second Datas. The passion he expresses for flying seems to be common to most children, for I get hundreds of letters on this subject.

Love-letters, too, pour in by the thousand, and I may tell you that I have had at least one offer of marriage, although, as will be seen, the writer was distinctly vague and remote in her "honourable intentions."

This soul-stirring epistle is addressed to "Peter Pan, the Tree Tops, Never Never Land, London," and runs :—

"MY DARLING, DARLING PETER PAN,—Can you speak Frensch and German. I love your letter. Wil you come here when you are out of werc bicos I would love to fli. I wood marri you tho I cannot bicos I am not yet grown up. I supose you do live in Fairiland. Are you marrid with Wendy if you are then I canot. I would like to live with you on the tree tops. Did you see Farther Christmas in fairiland from your lovin ADELINE ——."

Just one more letter—because this one is a great favourite of mine. It runs as follows :—

"DARLING PETER,—I should love to be you. I do hope you saw me last night. I was in the first row of the Upper Circle. I waved my handkerchief to you at the end. Do you remember last year I sent you a big photo of myself and you signed it? Do you think you could send me a teeny weeny letter, and then I will try and write like you. I go to boarding-school. I like you better than Wendy, but don't tell her because it might make her jelous, and I like her nearly as much as you. I should love you to write me a letter and I will send you a stamp, but if you don't have any time please keep the stamp. I should like to come and see you every day. I am going to be an actress if Mother will let me, but she says she won't so I shall run away wen I get older enough and come to you and then you can teach me how to be an actress. I should love to be as pretty as you. I have got 5 pounds in the bank and I would give it all if I could be like you. This is an awfully long letter and the pen has something rong with it. Now I must close with lots of love to Wendy but all my love to you from MADGE.

"P.S.—If I were a man I would marry you. Don't forget about writing if you have time. X X X X X X X X X X X X."

By the way, I wonder why so many people —editors among the number; it's not a bit of use their pleading "Not Guilty," because I know they are—seem to imagine that an actress who happens to be playing Peter Pan should be a sort of walking encyclopædia of general information on all sorts and kinds of subjects? In my own case during the past seven years I have received queries on all sorts and kinds of subjects, from how I should design a new-fashion Court dress or make a sugary cake for the nursery tea, down to whether I believe in running upstairs six times a day at top speed as a cure for indigestion.

One of the most puzzling queries that have ever come my way was the following, which was sent me by the editor of a certain influential North-country journal: "DEAR MISS CHASE," he wrote, "I should be obliged if you would send me some six or seven hundred words on 'How you would play Macbeth.'" Now, the possibility of my ever being asked to play Macbeth has never crossed my mind, so that, as a dutiful godchild, I asked my godfather, Mr. Barrie, whether he would help me out on this occasion.

He at once willingly consented to do so, and, on my behalf, wrote an article of the required length, which I signed and forwarded on to the editor as requested. Presumably, however, that gentleman did not consider "my" humble efforts were sufficiently learned to print, for the article never appeared, doubtless because the editor did not think the copy was sufficiently interesting. I wonder what his feelings would have been had he known that Mr. Barrie himself wrote the reply!

Let me here tell you another "Barrie" story, which was related to me not long ago by Mr. George Shelton, who has so often played the Pirate in "Peter Pan." When the play was produced in Paris, and on the last night of its run, during the performance Mr. Barrie came to Mr. Shelton and asked him to drop a French sentence into the middle of his famous "crocodile" speech, adding that he would be in the box to hear it. "That did it," said Mr. Shelton. "Though I had played with the late Mr. Toole in 'Ici on Parle Français,' I did not consider my French good enough for publication. I spent a miserable evening anticipating the dreadful line. There was Mr. Barrie in the box, my cue coming along, and, thinking of my French, I nearly lost my English. The cue came, I rushed at the line, the audience thought something had happened, and I was much

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PETER PAN AND THE BOYS ON THE PIRATE SHIP.

relieved when I made my final exit.

"Some time after the incident I happened to meet Mr. Barrie, and, knowing his love for a little joke, I asked him to tell me, when he gave me the French line to speak in 'Peter Pan,' if it was for the benefit of the speech or for a joke at my expense. He looked at me for a moment and said, 'My dear Shelton, it is not decided yet!'"

By the way, here is yet another new story about the author of "Peter Pan." As is well known, he is an ardent cricketer, if his achievements in that line scarcely march with his ambitions. One summer Mr. Barrie and his friend, Mr. E. W. Hornung, another cricket enthusiast, were walking in the country when they came to a village green, on which a number of very, very old men were playing cricket.

"Ah," said Mr. Hornung, joking, "you should bring your team down to play this lot."

Mr. Barrie turned the proposal over in his mind, and then answered, with great solemnity:—

"No, no, Hornung; they're too young. But they seem a healthy lot here. Go and ask them if their fathers are alive, and if so we'll challenge them."

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And still another story, which was told to me by a very great friend of his. In his younger days Mr. Barrie had one great hobby—collecting cigars. All his spare cash went in the purchase of good brands, and a cabinet in his chambers was full of fine cigars which he had "laid down" as a connoisseur fills the bins of his cellar with rare wine. There was a boy attached to Mr. Barrie's chambers who was far from satisfactory. He became, in fact, a perfect nuisance, and one day, when my godfather returned to his rooms and found the fourteen-year-old youth indulging in a short and grimy clay pipe full of rank, evil-smelling tobacco, he seized the occasion to dismiss him.

Two days afterwards Mr. Barrie was entertaining a friend, and with some pride announced that he would give him "a really good cigar." He went to the sacred cabinet which contained his expensive treasures, all neatly packed in layers of green tea, when, to his horror and dismay, he found it entirely empty! In place of the matured Havanas he found only a laconic note from the dismissed page, who wrote saying that, as his former master objected to a clay pipe, he had thought the matter over seriously, and had come to Mr. Barrie's own way of thinking, and had resolved to smoke nothing but good cigars for the future! He further remarked that, as he had full confidence in his master's judgment, he begged to tender him his earliest thanks!



"A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD YOUTH INDULGING IN A SHORT AND GRIMY CLAY PIPE."

Miss Viva Birkett, who you will remember as Mrs. Darling, tells quite a good story of Nana, the dog, and herself. Going downstairs to the stage at the Duke of York's Theatre, Miss Birkett met Nana (played by Mr. Silwood), who, on seeing her, exclaimed:—

"Don't tread on my tail, mumsie!"

"Alas!" she says, "the next minute I did stupidly tread on that tail, and out came wire springs and wool stuffing, and I know not what. One of the dressers had to patch up the mischief with safety-pins, but of course Nana could not wag her tail that night, and it hung most dejectedly throughout the rest of the evening."

Some years ago certain members of the "Peter Pan" company began to fear that, although this precocious boy "never grows up," there might still be some sort of danger that he would fail to move with the times; and so, in a laudable endeavour to make him quite up to date, we started the "Peter Pan Golf Club," which every year holds a dinner, the menu of which is "unusuall — very unusuall!" For instance, on one menu which I have before me as I write we prepared our guests for what we had in store for them by having printed on the cover the warning that "to dine will be an awfully big adventure." Then, instead of a list of the various dishes, for each course was given a saying from "Peter Pan," as follows:—

ONE CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING.

Back! Back! you puling spawn.
Dark and sinister soup, have at thee.
It's frightfully fascinating.
I'd rather they had been white rats!
There's something pathetic about them dumb critturs.
I'm a little bird that has broken out of the egg.
They are rather sweet, don't you think?
Cowardy, cowardy custard.
Brimstone and gall, what cozening is here!
Oh! the lovely.
She'll drink it, thinking it's milk.

WINES.

Do come out of that jug.
Poison? Nonsense.
It's that—that sticky sweet kind.
Something blew out the light.

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PETER PAN AND THE CHILDREN MOURNING FOR WENDY, WHOM THEY BELIEVE TO BE DEAD.

To the few people who do not understand "Peter Pan" language perhaps this menu may seem rather unintelligible, but as I am sure quite ninety-nine people out of a hundred talk "Peter Panish" I need not, I know, apologize for using an "unknown" tongue.

It goes without saying, of course, that since I have been playing Peter I have had quite a number of interesting experiences, some amusing, some sad, and some just "betwixt and between." For instance, when I was playing in Edinburgh not long ago a certain children's hospital there elected to give a few of its convalescent inmates a chance of going to see the play, and for this purpose a special box was booked at the theatre.

Needless to say, the fortunate children who were going to be allowed to have this treat were simply wild with excitement for days beforehand—with one exception, a wee and very nervous little boy, who, on being informed by one of the nurses that he was going to see "Peter Pan" in a box, burst into a flood of tears, and, between his convulsive sobs, asked, plaintively: "Will there be a lid to the box?"

So much envy, by the way, was caused amongst the other children who were unable to go to the theatre through illness—only a few, unfortunately, were on the "convalescent list"—that, at their special request, I promised to pay a personal visit to the hospital in my "Peter Pan" clothes, as one of the children called them. Well, when I arrived, a certain little cripple girl who had listened with great big wondering eyes and mouth gaping with astonishment to the accounts of Peter's extraordinary skill as a "flyer" became so excited that a nurse, fearing



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that her little patient would make herself ill, inquired anxiously as to what was the matter. I must tell you that, at the moment, I had gone to visit the inmates of another ward. "Can't 'oo understand," said the child, with feverish anxiety, "dat I'm waiting for Peter Pan to come back to teach me how to fly, so that I need never, never use my nasty horrid heavy crutches any more?"

There was one dreadfully hard-hearted little boy who came to the theatre not to clap. That was his object for coming, and he came round "behind" to tell me so in the middle of the play. His teeth were firm set. "I won't clap," he said, doggedly; "I'm not going to clap." And when the time came he didn't clap; above the clapping of all the others I could hear him shouting from a box, "Peter, I'm not clapping!"

I think the very nicest story I know about the play is one of some children who have an exceedingly prim and proper nurse, and now, since they have seen "Peter Pan,"



THE HOUSE IN THE TREE TOPS WHICH PAULINE CHASE HAS HAD BUILT FOR HER PIGEONS AT HER COUNTRY COTTAGE, "TREE TOPS," NEAR FARNHAM COMMON.

they won't go to sleep till she barks at them.

They all love Nana, the dog, and I suppose they know she is played by a human being, but not all their elders seem to know it, for we have heard of a nice old lady saying, at the end of the play, "It is wonderful how they train animals nowadays." And I think she was another nice lady (and probably a Nana herself) who summed up "Peter Pan" in these words: "It never would have happened if they had had a proper nurse."

And now I'm quite sure you will be getting quite tired of my rambling reminiscences of "Peter Pan." I must, however, tell you just one more



PETER PAN AND WENDY RETURNING TO THEIR HOME IN THE TREE TOPS.

OFF TO THE THEATRE.

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story, which I think provides one of the most extraordinary coincidences it is possible to imagine. Many years ago, when I was a tiny mite of four, my father and mother brought me over to England for a trip. At the time we knew very few people in England, and one morning we were taking a quiet stroll up Regent Street—I was dressed in the somewhat quaint costume shown in the illustration on this page—when, not looking where I was going, I bumped up against a tall, beautiful lady who was just going into a big shop.



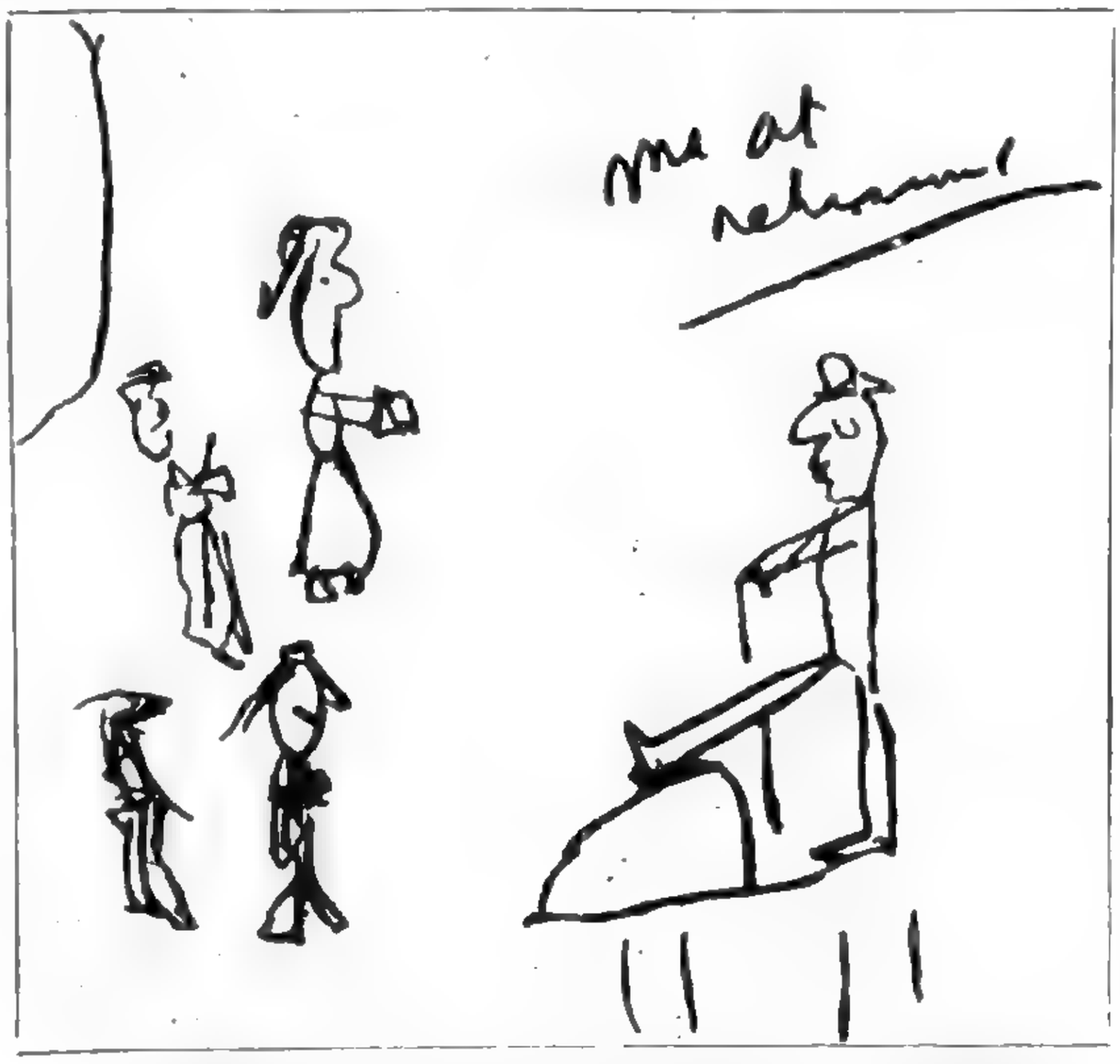
PAULINE CHASE AT THE AGE OF FOUR.

For a moment I was afraid that she was going to scold me for my carelessness. Instead, however, she looked down at me, and then, picking me up in her arms, she gave me a kiss and said, "What a sweet little American girl! And what a pity to ever grow up! Children," she said, turning to my father, "are ever so much nicer than grown-up people, don't you think?" Who do you think the lady in question was? I'm sure you'd never guess in a thousand years. She was your wonderful Ellen Terry, who is now one of my godmothers. Surely it is passing very strange that she should now be one of my godmothers, and that she should have made a remark about "children growing up," for of course, as long as I'm Peter Pan, it's quite impossible that I ever shall grow up, so that in this respect at least I have proved myself an obedient godchild.

I seem to have written a tremendous lot, but even at the risk of incurring the Editor's displeasure I must just add a few more lines to make an announcement which I am sure will be received with considerable surprise. And that is that Mr. Charles Frohman has lately, and since the first production of "Peter Pan," been seriously considering the advisability of adding the work of an artist to his many arduous labours. Often during the run of the play he looks into my dressing-room and, if I am on the stage, amuses himself by drawing pictures — the illustration shown on this page is one of his best efforts—which, could they but see them, would surely turn the black-and-white artists of the day emerald-green with envy.

And now I must bid you *au revoir*, as rehearsals are just about to commence; and as I haven't flown for over a whole year I'm almost sure that I shall require a little practice. Perhaps the hypercritical "children" among my readers may think that I have been a little too enthusiastic about the charms of my favourite part. So, in conclusion, I will add a remark which I overheard as two people—they were apparently husband and wife — came out of the pit. They had evidently been having a very mournful time, for they looked gloomy in the extreme.

"Well," said the man to the woman, in a melancholy voice, "you *would* come."



A DRAWING BY MR. CHARLES FROHMAN SHOWING HIMSELF AT A REHEARSAL.

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A Job of Work.

By P. G. WODEHOUSE.

Illustrated by E. H. Shepard.

I HAVE always admired the "Synopsis of Preceding Chapters" which tops each instalment of a serial in a daily paper. It is so curt, so compelling. It takes you by the scruff of the neck and hurls you into the middle of the story before you have time to remember that what you were really intending to read was "How to Make A Dainty Winter Coat for Baby Out of Father's Motor-Goggles" on the next page. I can hardly, I think, do better than adopt the same method in serving up the present narrative.

As follows:—

BEGIN TO-DAY.

LORD FREDDIE BOWEN, visiting New York, has met, fallen in love with, proposed to, and been accepted by

MARGARET, daughter of

FRANKLYN BIVATT, an unpleasant little millionaire with a weak digestion, a taste for dogmatic speech, and a personal appearance rather like one of Conan Doyle's pterodactyls. Lord Freddie has called on Mr. Bivatt, told him the news, and asked for his consent.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

Mr. Bivatt looked at Lord Freddie in silence. He belonged to the second and more offensive class of American millionaire. There are only two kinds. One has a mauve face and an eighteen-stone body, and grinds the face of the poor on a diet of champagne and lobster *à la* Newburg; the other—Mr. Bivatt's type—is small and shrivelled, weighs seven stone four, and fortifies himself, before clubbing the stuffing out of the widow and the orphan, with a light repast of hot water, triturated biscuit, and pepsine tabloids.

Lord Freddie also looked at Mr. Bivatt in silence. It was hard to believe that this curious little being could be the father of a girl who did not look really repulsive even in a photograph in a New York Sunday paper.

Mr. Bivatt broke the silence by taking a pepsine tabloid. Before speaking he took another look at Freddie—a thoroughly nasty look. The fact was that Freddie had chosen an unfortunate moment for his visit. Not only had Mr. Bivatt a bad attack of indigestion, but he had received that very morning from Margaret's elder sister, who some two years before had married the Earl of Datchet, a letter which would have prejudiced the editor of "Debrett" against the British Peerage. Lord Datchet was not an ideal husband. Among other things, he was practically a lunatic, which is always such a nuisance in the home. This letter was the latest of a number of despatches from the seat of war, and the series, taken as a whole, had done much to diminish Mr. Bivatt's simple faith in Norman blood. One titled son-in-law struck him as sufficient. He was not bitten by a craze for becoming a collector.

Consequently he looked at Lord Freddie and said "H'm!"

Freddie was somewhat disturbed. In the circumstances "H'm!" was scarcely an encouraging remark.

"You mean——?" he said.

"I mean just this. When Margaret marries she's going to marry a real person, not"—his mind wandered to the absent Datchet—"not a pop-eyed, spindle-shanked jack-rabbit, all nose and front teeth and eyeglass, with hair the colour of butter, and no chin or forehead. See?"

Freddie started, and his eye moved hastily to the mirror over the mantelpiece. What he saw partly reassured him. True, he was no Apollo. He was square and bullet-headed, and his nose had never really been the same since he had ducked into instead of away from the Cambridge light-weight's right swing in the inter-'Varsity competition; but apart from that he attained a pretty fair standard. Chin? If anything, he had too much. Teeth? Not at all prominent. Hair? Light, certainly; at school he had been called "Ginger." But what of that? No, the description puzzled him.

"Am I a jack-rabbit?" he inquired, curiously.

"I don't know," said Mr. Bivatt. "I don't know anything about you. I've never

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heard your name before. I've forgotten it now. What *is* your name? I only know it's got a 'Lord' tacked on to it."

"By Nature. Not by me. It runs in the blood. Don't you like lords?"

Mr. Bivatt eyed him fixedly and swallowed another tabloid. "Do you know the Earl of Datchet?" he asked.

"Only by reputation."

"Oh. you do know him by reputation? What have you heard about him?"

"Well, only in a general way that he's a pretty average sort of rotter. A bit off his chump, I've heard. One of the filberts, don't you know, and all that sort of thing. Nothing more."

"You didn't hear that he was my son-in-law? Well, he is. So now perhaps you understand why I didn't leap at you and fold you in my arms when you suggested marrying Margaret. I don't want another Datchet in the family."

"Good Lord! I hope I'm not like Datchet!"

"I hope you're not, for your sake, if you want to marry Margaret. Well, let's get down to it. Datchet's speciality was aristocratic idleness. He had never done a day's work in his life. No Datchet ever had, apparently. The last time any of the bunch had ever shown any signs of perspiring at the brow was when the first Earl carried William the Conqueror's bag down the gangway. Is that your long suit, too—trembling when you see a job of work? How old are you? Twenty-seven? Well, keep it to the last six years, if you like. What have you done since you came of age?"

"Well, I suppose if you put it that way——"

"I do put it just that way. Have you earned a cent in your life?"

"No. But——"

"It isn't a case of but. I know exactly what you're trying to say, that there wasn't any need for you to work, and so on. I know all that. That's not the point. The point is that the man who marries Margaret has got to be capable of work. There's only one way of telling the difference between a man and a jack-rabbit till you get to know them, and that is that the man will work." Mr. Bivatt took another tabloid. "You remember Jacob?" he said.

"Jacob? I've met a man called Jacob at the National Sporting Club."

"I mean the one in the Bible, the one who worked seven years for the girl, got the wrong one, and started in right away to do another seven years. *He* wasn't a jack-rabbit!"

"Wonderful Johnny," agreed Lord Freddie, admiringly.

"They managed things mighty sensibly in those days. You didn't catch them getting stung by any pop-eyed Datchets. It's given me an idea, talking of Jacob. That's the sort of man I want for Margaret. See? I don't ask him to wait seven years, let alone fourteen. But I will have him show that there's something in him. Now, I'll make a proposition to you. You go and hunt for a job and get it, and hold it long enough to make five hundred dollars, and you can marry Margaret as soon as you like afterwards. But you've got to make it by work. No going out and winning it at poker, or putting your month's allowance on something to win and for a place. See?"

"It seems to me," said Freddie, "that you bar every avenue of legitimate enterprise. But I shall romp home all the same. You mean earn five hundred, not save it?"

"Earn will do. But let's get this fixed right. When I say earn, I mean earn. I don't mean sit up and beg and have it fall into your mouth. Manual work or brain work it's got to be—one of the two. I shall check your statement pretty sharply. And you'll drop your title while you're at it. You've got to get this job on your merits, if you have any. Is that plain?"

"Offensively."

"You mean to try it? You won't like it."

"I don't suppose Jacob *liked* it—what?"

"I suppose not. Good morning."

And Mr. Bivatt, swallowing another tabloid, turned his attention once more to harrying the widow and the orphan.

Freddie, when he set out on his pilgrimage, had his eyes open for something soft and easy. But there are no really easy jobs. Even the man who fastened a snake into a length of hose-pipe with a washer, and stood in the background working a police-rattle—the whole outfit being presented to the public in a dim light as the largest rattlesnake in captivity—had to run for his life when the washer worked loose and the snake escaped.

It amazed Freddie, the difficulty of getting work. Work had always seemed to him so peculiarly unpleasant that he had supposed that the supply must exceed the demand. The contrary appeared to be the case.

Eventually, after wearing a groove in the pavements, he found himself, through a combination of lucky chances, in charge of the news-stand at a large hotel. Twelve dollars a week was the stipend. Working it out on a

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slip of paper, he perceived that his ordeal was to be a mere few months' canter of unexacting work in quite comfortable surroundings. Datchet himself could have done it on his butter-coloured head.

There is always a catch in these good things. For four days all went well. He found his duties pleasant. But on the fifth day came reaction. From the moment he began work a feeling of utter loathing for this particular form of money-making enveloped him as in a cloud. The customers irritated him. He was hopelessly bored.



"THE BATTLE WAS RAGING ALL OVER THE LOBBY."

The end was in sight. It came early on the afternoon of the sixth day, through the medium of one of the regular customers, a man who, even in happier moments, had always got on his nerves. He was a man with a rasping voice and a peremptory manner, who demanded a daily paper or a penny stamp with the air of one cursing an enemy.

Freddie had fallen into gloomy meditation, business being slack at the time, when this man appeared before him and shouted :—

"Stamp!"

Freddie started, but made no reply.

"Stamp!"

Freddie's gaze circled round the lobby and eventually rested on the object before him.

"Stamp!"

Freddie inspected him with frigid scorn.

"Why should I?" he asked, coldly.

The hotel in which Freddie had found employment was a sporting hotel in the heart of that section of New York known as the Tenderloin. Its patrons were mainly racing men, gamblers, and commercial travellers, men of action rather than words. This particular patron was essentially the man of action. Freddie's question offending him, he hit him in the eye, and a minute later Freddie, breathing slaughter, had vaulted the barrier of newspapers, and the battle was raging all over the lobby, to the huge contentment of a mixed assortment of patrons, bell-boys, barkeepers, pages, and waiters from the adjoining *café*. Six minutes later, when Freddie, panting a little and blinking to ease the pain of his injured eye, was waiting for his opponent to rise, which he did not do, the manager entered the arena. The manager was a man with sporting blood and a sense of the proprieties. The former had kept him an interested spectator during the late proceedings; the latter now made him step forward, tap

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Freddie on the shoulder, and inform him that his connection with the hotel was at an end.

Freddie went out into the world with twelve dollars and a black eye. As he passed through the swing door a slight cheer was raised in his honour by the grateful audience.

I would enlarge on Freddie's emotions at losing his situation, were it not for the fact that two days later he found another. There was a bell-boy at his late hotel to whom he had endeared himself by allowing him to read the baseball news free of charge; a red-headed, world-weary, prematurely aged boy, to whom New York was an open book. He met Freddie in the street.

"Halloa, you!" he said. "I been huntin' after you. Lookin' fer a job? My cousin runs a *café* on Fourteenth Street. He's wantin' a new waiter. I seen the card in the window yesterday. You try there and say I sent you. It's a tough joint, though."

"After what happened the day before yesterday, it seems to me that the tougher the joint the more likely I am to hold my job. I seem to lack polish."

"The East Side Delmonico's is the name."

"It sounds too refined for me."

"It may *sound* that way," said the bell-boy, "but it ain't."

Nor was it. The East Side Delmonico's proved to be a dingy though sizable establishment at a spot where Fourteenth Street wore a more than usually tough and battered look. Fourteenth Street has that air of raffish melancholy which always marks a district visited for awhile and then deserted by fashion.

It appeared that the bell-boy, who had been deeply impressed by Freddie's handling of the irritable news-stand customer, had given him an excellent character in advance; and he found, on arrival, that he was no stranger to Mr. "Blinky" Anderson, the proprietor. The bell-boy's cousin welcomed him, if not with open arms, with quite marked satisfaction. He examined the injured eye, stamped it with the seal of his approval as "some lamp," and, having informed him that his weekly envelope would contain five dollars and that his food was presented free by the management, requested him to slip out of his coat, grab an apron, and get busy.

Freddie was a young man who took life as it came. He was a sociable being, and could be happy anywhere so long as he was not bored. The solitude of the news-stand had bored him, but at the East Side Delmonico's life was too full of movement to permit of *ennui*. He soon perceived that there was more in this curious establishment than met the eye, and this by design rather than accident. The fact was that "Blinky's," as its patrons tersely styled Anderson's Parisian Café and Restaurant, the East Side Delmonico's, offered attractions to the cognoscenti other than the mere restoration of the inner man with meat and drink. On the first floor, for instance, provided that you could convince the management of the excellence of your motives, you could "buck the tiger"—a feat which sounds perilous but is not, except to the purse. On the floor above, again, if you were that kind of idiot, you might play roulette. And in the basement, in a large, cellar-like room, lit with countless electric lights, boxing contests were held on Saturday nights before audiences financially, if not morally, select.

In fact, the East Side Delmonico's was nothing more nor less than a den of iniquity. But nobody could call it dull, and Freddie revelled in his duties. He booked orders, served drinks, smashed plates, bullied the cook, chaffed the customers when they were merry, seized them by the neck and ran them into the street when they were too merry, and in every other way comported himself like one who has at last found his true vocation. And time rolled on.

We will leave time rolling for the moment and return to Mr. Bivatt, raising the curtain at the beginning of his *tête-à-tête* dinner with his fellow-plutocrat, T. Mortimer Dunlop. T. Mortimer was the other sort of millionaire. You could have told he was a millionaire just by looking at him. He bulged. Wherever a man can bulge, there did T. Mortimer Dunlop bulge. His head was bald, his face purple, his hands red. He was accustomed to refer to himself somewhat frequently as a "dead game sport." He wheezed when he spoke.

I raise the curtain on Mr. Bivatt at the beginning of dinner because it was at the beginning of dinner that he allowed Mr. Dunlop to persuade him to drink a Dawn of Hope cocktail—so called because it cheers you up. It cheered Mr. Bivatt up.

Mr. Bivatt needed cheering up. That very afternoon his only son Twombley had struck him for a thousand dollars to pay a poker debt. A thousand dollars is not a large sum to a man of Mr. Bivatt's wealth, but it is your really rich man who unbelts least joyously. Together with the cheque Twombley had received a parental lecture. He

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had appeared to be impressed by it; but it was the doubt as to its perfect efficacy which was depressing Mr. Bivatt. There was no doubt that Twombley was a trial. It was only the awe with which he regarded his father that kept him within bounds. Mr. Bivatt sighed and took a pepsine tabloid.

It was at this point that T. Mortimer Dunlop, summoning the waiter, ordered two Dawn of Hope cocktails.

"Nonsense!" he wheezed, in response to Mr. Bivatt's protest. "Be a sport! *I'm* a dead game sport. Hurry up, waiter. Two Dawn of Hope."

Mr. Bivatt weakly surrendered. He was there entirely to please Mr. Dunlop, for there was a big deal in the air, to which Mr. Dunlop's co-operation was essential. This was no time to think about one's digestion or the habits of a lifetime. If, to conciliate invaluable Mr. Dunlop, it was necessary to be a dead game sport and drink a cocktail, then a dead game sport he would be. He took the curious substance from the waiter and pecked at it like a nervous bird. He blinked, and pecked again—less nervously this time.

You, gentle reader, who simply wallow in alcoholic stimulants at every meal, will find it hard to understand the wave of emotion which surged through Mr. Bivatt's soul as he reached the half-way point in the magic glass. But Mr. Bivatt for thirty years had confined his potions to hot water, and the effect on him was remarkable. He no longer felt depressed. Hope, so to speak, had dawned with a jerk. Life was a thing of wonderful joy and infinite possibilities.

We therefore find him, at the end of dinner, leaning across the table, thumping it with clenched fist, and addressing Mr. Dunlop through the smoke of the latter's cigar thus:—

"Dunlop, old man, how would it be to go and see a show? I'm ready for anything, old man, Dunlop. I'm a dead game sport, Dunlop, old fellow! That's what I am."

One thing leads to another. The curtain falls on Mr. Bivatt smoking a Turkish cigarette in a manner that can only be described as absolutely reckless.

These things, I should mention, happened on a Saturday night. About an hour after Mr. Bivatt had lit his cigarette Freddie, in the *café* at the East Side Delmonico's, was aware of a thick-set, short-haired, tough-looking young man settling himself at one of the tables and hammering a glass with the blade of his knife. In the other hand he waved the bill of fare. He was also shouting, "Hey!" Taking him for all in all, Freddie set him down as a hungry young man. He moved towards him to minister to his needs.

"Well, cully," he said, affably, "and what will *you* wrap yourself around?"

You were supposed to unbend and be chummy with the customers if you were a waiter at "Blinky's." The customers expected it. If you called a patron of the East Side Delmonico's "sir," he scented sarcasm, and was apt to throw things.

The young man had a grievance.

"Say, can you beat it? Me signed up to fight a guy here at a hundred and thirty-three, ring-side, and starving meself for weeks to make the weight. Say, I ain't had a square meal since Ponto was a pup—and, gee! along comes word that he's sprained a foot and will we kindly not expect him. And all I get is the forfeit money."

He snorted.

"Forfeit money! Keep it! It ain't but a hundred plunks, and the loser's end was three hundred. And there wouldn't have been any loser's end in mine at that. Why, say, I'd have licked that guy with me eyes shut."

He kicked the table-leg morosely.

"Your story moves me much," said Freddie. "And now, what shall we shoot into you?"

"You attending to this table?"

"I am."

The young man scanned the bill of fare.

"Noodle - soup - bit - o' - weakfish - fried - chicken - Southern - style - corn - on - the - cob-bit - o' - steak - fried - potatoes - four - fried-eggs - done - on - both - sides - apple - dumpling-with-hard-sauce-and-a-cup-custard," he observed, rapidly. "That'll do to start with. And, say, bring all the lager-beer you can find. I've forgotten what it tastes like."

"That's right," said Freddie, sympathetically; "keep your strength up."

"I'll try," said the thick-set young man. "Get a move on."

There was no doubt about the pugilist's appetite. It gave Freddie quite a thrill of altruistic pleasure to watch him eat. He felt like a philanthropist entertaining a starving beggar. He fetched and carried assiduously for the diner, and when at length the latter called for coffee and a cigar and sank back in his chair with a happy sigh, he nearly cheered.

On his way to the kitchen he encountered his employer, Mr. "Blinky" Anderson, looking depressed. Freddie gathered the reason for his gloom. He liked "Blinky," and thought respectful condolence would not be out of place.

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"Sorry to hear the news, sir."

"Hey?" said Mr. Anderson, moodily.

"I hear the main event has fallen through."

"Who told you?"

"I have been waiting on one of the fighters upstairs."

Mr. Anderson nodded.

"That would be the Tennessee Bear-Cat."

"Very possibly. He had that appearance."

Like the Bear-Cat, Mr. Anderson was rendered communicative by grief. Freddie had a sympathetic manner, and many men had confided in him.

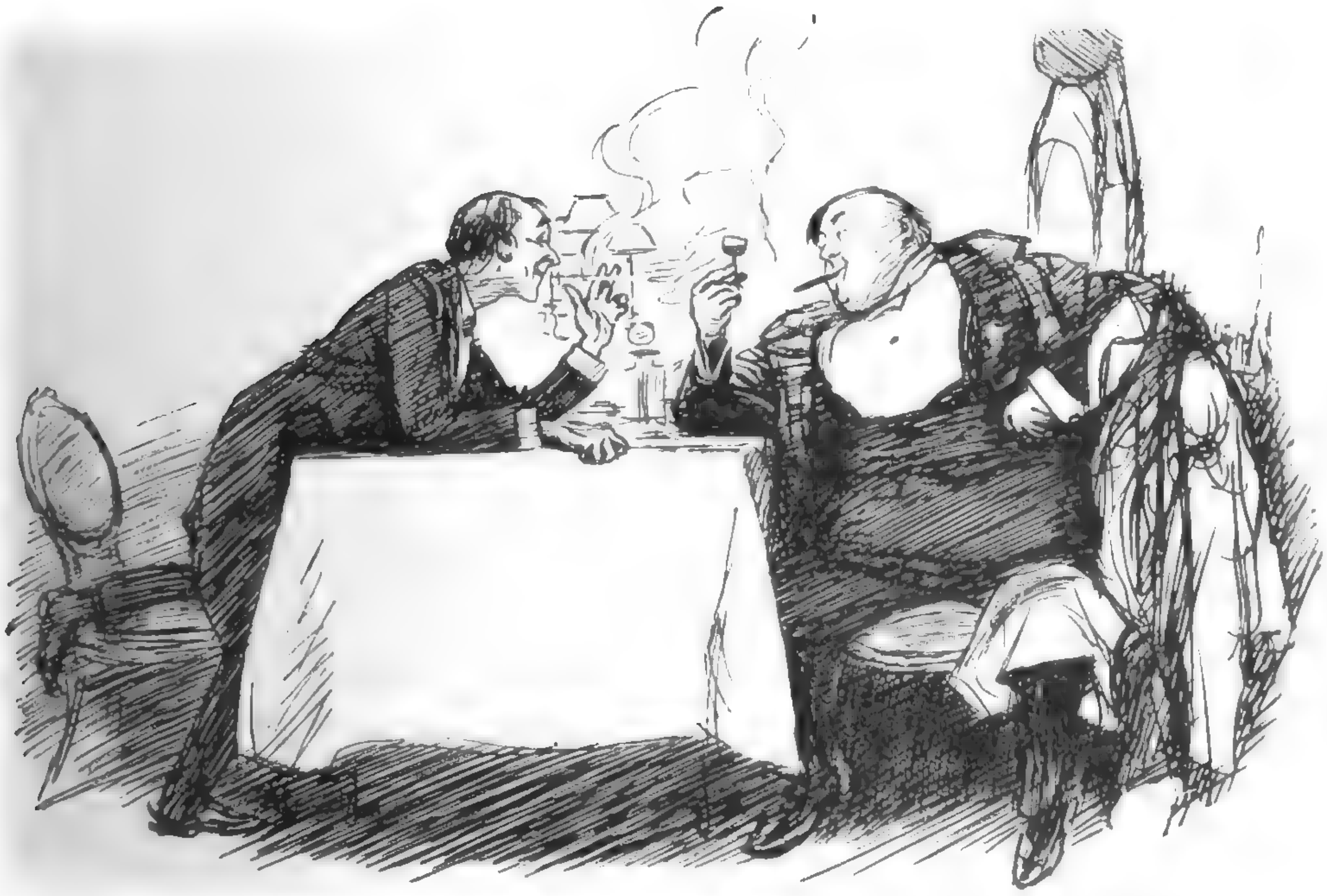
"It was One-Round Smith who backed down. Says he's hurt his foot. Huh!" Mr. Anderson grunted satirically, but pathos succeeded satire again almost at once. "I ain't told them about it yet," he went on, jerking his head in the direction of the invisible audience. "The preliminaries have just started, and what those guys will say when they find there ain't going to be a main event I don't know. I guess they'll want to lynch somebody. I ought to tell 'em right away, but I can't seem to sorter brace myself to it. It's the best audience, too, we've ever had. All the sports in town are there. Rich guys, too—none of your cheap skates. I just seen old man Dunlop blow in with a pal, and he's worth all sorts o' money. And now there won't be no fight. Wouldn't that jar you?"

"Can't you find a substitute?"

"Substitute! This ain't a preliminary between two dubs. It was the real thing for big money. And all the sports in town come to watch it. Substitute! Ain't you ever heard of the Bear-Cat? He's a wild Indian. Who's going to offer to step up and swap punches with a terror like him?"

"I am," said Freddie.

Mr. Anderson stared at him with open mouth.



"I'M A DEAD GAME SPORT, DUNLOP, OLD FELLOW! THAT'S WHAT I AM."

"You!"

"Me."

"You'll fight the Tennessee Bear-Cat?"

"I'd fight Jack Johnson if he'd just finished the meal that fellow has been having," said Freddie, simply.

Mr. Anderson was not a swift thinker. He stood, blinking, and allowed the idea to soak through. It penetrated slowly, like water through a ceiling.

"He'd eat you," he said, at last.

"Well, I'm the only thing in this place he hasn't eaten. Why stint him?"

"But, say, have you done any fighting?"

"As an amateur, a good deal."

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"Amateur! Say, can you see them sports down there standing a main event between the Tennessee Bear-Cat and an amateur?"

"Why tell them? Say I'm the heavy-light-weight champion of England."

"What's a heavy-light-weight?"

"It's a new class, in between the lights and the welters."

By this time the idea had fairly worked its way through into Mr. Anderson's mind, and its merits were beginning to appeal to him. It was certain that, if Freddie were not allowed to fill the gap, there would be no main event that night. And in the peculiar circumstances it was just possible that he might do well enough to satisfy the audience. The cloud passed from Mr. Anderson's face, for all the world as if he had taken a Dawn of Hope cocktail.

"Why, say," he said, "there's something in this."

"You bet there is," said Freddie. "There's the loser's end, three hundred of the best."

Mr. Anderson clapped him on the shoulder.

"And another hundred from me if you last five rounds," he said. "I guess five'll satisfy them, if you make them fast ones. I'll go and tell the Bear-Cat."

"And I'll go and get him his coffee and the strongest cigar you keep. Every little helps."

Freddie entered the ring in a costume borrowed from one of the fighters in the preliminaries, and, seating himself in his corner, had his first sight of Mr. "Blinky" Anderson's celebrated basement. Most of the light in the place was concentrated over the roped platform of the ring, and all he got was a vague impression of space. There seemed to be a great many people present. The white shirt-fronts reminded him of the National Sporting Club.

His eye was caught by a face in the first row of ring-side seats. It seemed familiar. Where had he seen it before? And then he recognized Mr. Bivatt—a transformed Mr. Bivatt, happier-looking, excited, altogether more human. Their eyes met, but there was no recognition in the millionaire's. Freddie had shaved his moustache as a preliminary to the life of toil, and Mr. Bivatt, beaming happily up at him from beside that dead game sport, T. Mortimer Dunlop, had no recollection of ever having seen him before.

Freddie's attention was diverted from audience to ring by the arrival of the Tennessee Bear-Cat. There was a subdued murmur of applause—applause had to be merely murmured on these occasions—and for one moment, as he looked at him, Freddie regretted the contract he had undertaken. What Mr. Anderson had said about wild Indians came home to him. Certainly the Bear-Cat looked one. He was an extraordinarily-muscled young man. Freddie was mainly muscle himself, but the Bear-Cat appeared to be a kind of freak. Lumps and cords protruded from him in all directions. His face wore a look of placid content, and he had a general air of happy repletion, a fate-cannot-touch-me-I-have-dined-to-day expression. He was chewing gum.

A shirt-sleeved gentleman of full habit climbed into the ring, puffing slightly.

"Gents! Main event. Have an apology offer—behalf of the management. Was to have been ten-round between Sam Proctor, better known as th' Tennessee Bear-Cat, and One-Round Smith, at one-thirty-three ring-side. But—seems to have been a—naccident. One-Round havin' sustained severe injury to foot. Rend'rin' it—impossible—appear t'night before you. Deeply regret unavoid'ble dis'pointment."

The portly man's breath was going fast, but he still had sufficient for a brilliant flight of fancy, a vast improvement on Freddie's humble effort.

"Have honour, however, present t'you Jimmy Smith, brother of One-Round—stranger to this city—but—well known on Pacific Coast—where—winner of forty-seven battles. Claimant to welter-weight belt. Gents, Jimmy Smith, the Santa Barbara Whirlwind!"

Freddie bowed. The speech, for some mysterious reason probably explainable by Christian Science, had had quite a tonic effect on him. The mere thought of those forty-seven victories gave him heart. After all, who was this Tennessee Bear-Cat? A mere walking repository of noodle soup, weakfish, fried chicken, eggs, corn, apple-dumplings, lager-beer, and cup-custards. A perambulating bill of fare. That was what he was. And, anyway, he was probably muscle-bound, and would be as slow as a top.

The introducer, however, presented him in another aspect. He had got his second wind now, and used it.

"Gents! The Tennessee Bear-Cat! You all know Sam. The toughest, huskiest, wickedest little old slugger that ever came down the pike. The boy who's cleaned up all the light-weights around these parts, and is in a dead straight line—for—the champ*een*-ship of the world."

He waved his hand dramatically. The

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Bear-Cat, overwhelmed by these tributes, shifted his chewing-gum to the other cheek, and simpered coyly, as who should say, "Stop your nonsense, Archibald!" And the gong clanged.

Freddie started the fight with the advantage that his plan of campaign was perfectly clear in his mind. Rapid attack was his policy. When a stout gentleman in shirt-sleeves has been exhausting his scanty stock of breath calling you a whirlwind, decency forbids that you should behave like a zephyr. He shook hands, and, on the principle of beginning as you mean to go on, proceeded without delay to poke his left earnestly into the middle of the Bear-Cat's face. He then brought his right round with a thud on to what the latter probably still called his ear—a strange, shapeless growth rather like a leather cauliflower—and sprang back. The Bear-Cat shifted his gum and smiled gratefully.

A heavy swing on the part of the Bear-Cat was the next event of note. Freddie avoided it with ease and slipped in a crisp left. As he had expected, his opponent was too slow to be dangerous. Dangerous! He was not even making the thing interesting, thought Freddie, as he side-stepped another swing and brought his right up to the chin. He went to his corner at the end of the round, glowing with satisfaction. This was easy.

It was towards the middle of the second round that he received a shock. Till then the curious ease with which he had reached his opponent's head had caused him to concentrate on it. It now occurred to him that by omitting to attack the body he was, as it were, wasting the gifts of Providence. Consequently, having worked his man into an angle of the ropes with his back against a post, he feinted with his left, drew a blow, and then, ducking quickly, put all his weight into a low, straight right.

The effect was remarkable. The Bear-Cat uttered a startled grunt; a look came into his face of mingled pain and reproach, as if his faith in human nature had been shaken,



"HIS FACE WORE A LOOK OF PLACID CONTENT, AND HE HAD A GENERAL AIR OF HAPPY REPLETION."

and he fell into a clinch. And as Freddie vainly struggled to free himself a voice murmured in his ear:—

"Say, cut that out!"

The stout referee prised them apart. Freddie darted forward, missed with his left, and the Bear-Cat clinched again—more, it appeared, in order to resume the interrupted conversation than from motives of safety.

"Leave me stummick be, you rummy," he hissed, rapidly. "Ain't you got no tact? 'Blinky' promised me fifty if I'd let you stay three rounds, but one more like that, and I'll forget meself and knock you through the ceiling."

Only when he reached his corner did the full meaning of the words strike Freddie.

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All the glow of victory left him. It was a put-up job! "Blinky," to ensure his patrons something resembling a fight, had induced the Bear-Cat to fight false during the first three rounds.

The shock of it utterly disheartened him. So that was why he had been making such a showing! That was why his jabs and hooks had got home with such clockwork precision! Probably his opponent had been laughing at him all the time. The thought stung him. He had never been remarkable for an even temper, and now a cold fury seized him. He would show them, by George!

The third round was the most spectacular of the fight. Even the regular patrons of "Blinky's" Saturday night exhibitions threw aside their prudence and bellowed approval. Smiling wanly and clinching often, the Bear-Cat fixed his mind on his fifty dollars to buoy himself up, while Freddie, with a nasty gleam in his eyes, behaved every moment more like a Santa Barbara Whirlwind might reasonably be expected to behave. Seldom had the Bear-Cat heard sweeter music than the note of the gong terminating the round. He moved slowly to his corner, and handed his chewing-gum to his second to hold for him. It was strictly business now. He thought hard thoughts as he lay back in his chair.

In the other corner Freddie also was thinking. The exhilarating exercise of the last round had soothed him and cleared his brain; and he, too, as he left his corner for the fourth session, was resolved to attend strictly to business. And his business was to stay five rounds and earn that hundred dollars.

Connoisseurs in the ring-seats, who had been telling their friends during the previous interval that Freddie had "got him going," changed their minds and gave it as their opinion that he had "blown up." They were wrong. He was fighting solely on the defensive now from policy, not from fatigue.

The Bear-Cat came on with a rush, head down, swinging with left and right. The change from his former attitude was remarkable, and Freddie, if he had not been prepared for it, might have been destroyed offhand. There was no standing up against such an onslaught. He covered up and ducked and slipped and side-stepped, and slipped again, and, when the gong sounded, he was still intact.

Freddie came up for the fifth round brimming over with determination. He meant to do or die. Before the end of the first half-minute it was borne in upon him that he was far more likely to die than do. He was a good amateur boxer. He had been well taught, and he knew all the recognized stops for the recognized blows. But the Bear-Cat had either invented a number of blows not in the regular curriculum, or else it was his manner of delivering them that gave that impression. Reason told Freddie that his opponent was not swinging left and right simultaneously, but the hard fact remained that, just as he guarded one blow, another came from the opposite point of the compass and took him squarely on the side of the head. He had a disagreeable sensation as if an automobile had run into him, and then he was on the floor, with the stout referee sawing the air above him.

The thought of a hundred dollars is a reviving agent that makes oxygen look like a sleeping-draught. No sooner had it returned to his mind than his head cleared and he rose to his feet, as full of fight as ever. He perceived the Bear-Cat slithering towards him, and leaped to one side like a Russian dancer. The Bear-Cat collided with the ropes and grunted discontentedly.

Probably, if Freddie had had a sizable plot of ground, such as Hyde Park or Dartmoor, to manœuvre in, he might have avoided his opponent for some considerable time. The ring being only twenty feet square, he was hampered. A few more wild leaps, interspersed with one or two harmless left jabs, and he found himself penned up in a corner, with the Bear-Cat, smiling pleasantly again now, making hypnotic passes before his eyes.

The Bear-Cat was not one of your reticent fighters. He was candour itself.

"Here it comes, kid!" he remarked, affably, and "it" came. Freddie's world suddenly resolved itself into a confused jumble of pirouetting stars, chairs, shirt-fronts, and electric lights, and he fell forward in a boneless heap. There was a noise of rushing waters in his ears, and, mingled with it, the sound of voices. Some person or persons, he felt dimly, seemed to be making a good deal of an uproar. His brain was clouded, but the fighting instinct still worked within him; and, almost unconsciously, he groped for the lower rope, found it, and pulled himself to his feet. And then the lights went out.

How long it was before he realized that the lights actually had gone out, and that the abrupt darkness was not due to a repetition of "it," he never knew. But it must have been some length of time, for when the

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room became suddenly light again his head was clear and, except for a conviction that his neck was broken, he felt tolerably well.

His eyes having grown accustomed to the light, he saw with astonishment that remarkable changes had taken place in the room. With the exception of some half-dozen persons, the audience had disappeared entirely, and each of those who remained was in the grasp of a massive policeman. Two more intelligent officers were beckoning to him to come down from the platform.

The New York police force is subject to periodical attacks of sensitiveness with regard to the purity of the city. In between these spasms a certain lethargy seems to grip it, but when it does act its energy is wonderful. The East Side Delmonico's had been raided.

It was obvious that the purity of the city demanded that Freddie should appear in court in a less exiguous costume than his present one. The two policemen accompanied him to the dressing-room.

On a chair in one corner sat the Tennessee Bear-Cat, lacing his shoes. On a chair in another corner sat Mr. Franklyn Bivatt, holding his head in his hands.

Fate, Mr. Bivatt considered, had not treated him well. Nor, he added mentally, had T. Mortimer Dunlop. For directly the person, to be found in every gathering, who mysteriously gets to know things in advance of his fellows had given the alarm, T. Mortimer, who knew every inch of "Blinky's" basement and, like other dead game sports who frequented it, had his exits and his entrances—particularly his exits—had skimmed away like a corpulent snipe and vanished, leaving Mr. Bivatt to look after himself. As Mr. Bivatt had failed to look after himself, the constabulary were looking after him.

"Who's the squirt?" asked the first policeman, indicating Mr. Bivatt.

"I don't know," said the second. "I caught him trying to hook it, and held him. Keep an eye on him. I think it's Boston Willie, the safe-blower. Keep these three here till I get back. I'm off upstairs."

The door closed behind them. Presently it creaked and was still. The remaining policeman was leaning against it.

The Tennessee Bear-Cat nodded amiably at Freddie.

"Feeling better, kid? Why didn't you duck? I told you it was coming, didn't I?"

Mr. Bivatt groaned hollowly. Life was very grey. He was in the hands of the police, and he had indigestion and no pepsine tabloids.

"Say, it ain't so bad as all that," said the Bear-Cat. "Not if you've got any sugar, it ain't."

"My doctor expressly forbids me sugar," replied Mr. Bivatt.

The Bear-Cat gave a peculiar jerk of his head, indicative of the intelligent man's contempt for the slower-witted.

"Not that sort of sugar, you rummy. Gee! Do you think this is a tea-party? Dough, you mutt."

"Do you mean money, by any chance?" asked Freddie.

The Bear-Cat said that he did mean money. He went further. Mr. Bivatt appearing to be in a sort of trance, he put a hand in his pocket and extracted a pocket-book.

"I guess these'll do," he said, removing a couple of bills.

He rapped on the door.

"Hey, Mike!"

"Quit that," answered a gruff voice without.

"I want to speak to you. Got something to say."

The door opened.

"Well?"

"Say, Mike, you've got a kind face. Going to let us go, ain't you?"

The policeman eyed the Bear-Cat stolidly. The Bear-Cat's answering glance was more friendly.

"See what the fairies have brought, Mike."

The policeman's gaze shifted to the bills.

"Say," he said, severely, as he held out his hand, "you don't reckon I'd take a bribe, I hope?"

"Certainly not," said the Bear-Cat, indignantly.

There was a musical rustling.

"Don't mind if we say good night now, do you?" said the Bear-Cat. "They'll be getting anxious about us at home."

The policeman with the kind face met his colleague in the basement.

"Say, you know those guys in the dressing-room," he said.

"Uh-huh," said the colleague.

"They overpowered me and got away."

"Halves," said the colleague.

Having lost the Bear-Cat—no difficult task, for he dived into the first saloon—Mr. Bivatt and Freddie turned their steps towards Broadway. A certain dignity which had been lacking in the dressing-room had crept back into Mr. Bivatt's manner.

"Go away," he said. "I will not have you following me."

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"I am not following you," said Freddie. "We are walking arm in arm."

Mr. Bivatt wrenched himself free. "Go away, or I will call a police—er—go away!"

"Have you forgotten me? I was afraid you had. I won't keep you long. I only wanted to tell you that I had nearly made that five hundred dollars."

Mr. Bivatt started and glared at Freddie in the light of a shop-window. He gurgled speechlessly.

"I haven't added it all up yet. I have been too busy making it. Let me see.



"'SAY,' HE SAID, SEVERELY, AS HE HELD OUT HIS HAND, 'YOU DON'T RECKON I'D TAKE A BRIBE, I HOPE?'"

Twelve dollars from the hotel. Two weeks as a waiter at five a week. Twenty-two, Tips, about another dollar. Three hundred for the loser's end—I can't claim a draw, as I was practically out. And 'Blinky' Anderson promised me another hundred if I stayed five rounds. Well, I was on my feet when the police broke up the show, but maybe, after what has happened, he won't pay up. Anyway, I've got three hundred and twenty-three——"

"Will you kindly stop this foolery and allow me to speak?" said Mr. Bivatt. "When I made our agreement I naturally alluded to responsible, respectable work. I did not include low prize-fighting and——"

"You said manual work or brain work. Wasn't mine about as manual as you could get?"

"I have nothing further to say."

Freddie sighed.

"Oh, well," he said, "I suppose I shall have to start all over again. I wish you had let me know sooner. I shall try brain work this time. I shall write my experiences and try and sell them to a paper. What happened to-night ought to please some editor. The way you got us out of that dressing-room! It was the smartest thing I ever saw. There ought to be money in that. Well, good night. May I come and report later?"

He turned away, but stopped as he heard an odd choking sound behind him.

"Is anything the matter?"

Mr. Bivatt clutched him with one hand and patted his arm affectionately with the other.

"Don't—er—don't go away, my boy," he said. "Come with me to the drug-store while I get some pepsine tabloids, and then we'll go home and talk it over. I think we may be able to arrange something, after all."

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The Case of the Plain Man.

Second Article: "THE TASTE FOR PLEASURE."

By ARNOLD BENNETT.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

I.

ONE evening—it is bound to happen in the evening when it does happen—the plain man whose case I endeavoured to analyse in a previous paper will suddenly explode. The smouldering volcano within that placid and wise exterior will burst forth, and the surrounding country will be covered with the hot lava of his immense hidden grievance. The business day has perhaps been marked by an unusual succession of annoyances, exasperations, disappointments—but he has met them with fine philosophic calm; fatigue has overtaken him—but it has not overcome him; throughout the long ordeal at the office he has remained master of himself, a wondrous example to the young and the foolish. And then some entirely unimportant occurrence—say, an invitation to a golf foursome which his duties forbid him to accept—a trifle, a nothing, comes along and brings about the explosion, in a fashion excessively disconcerting to the onlooker, and he exclaims, acidly, savagely, with a profound pessimism:—

"What pleasure do *I* get out of life?"

And in that single abrupt question (to which there is only one answer) he lays bare the central flaw of his existence.

The onlooker will probably be his wife, and the tone employed will probably imply that she is somehow mysteriously to blame for the fact that his earthly days are not one unbroken series of joyous diversions. He has no pose to keep up with his wife. And, moreover, if he really loves her he will find a certain curious satisfaction in hurting her now and then, in being wilfully unjust to her, as he would never hurt or be unjust to a mere friend. (Herein is one of the mysterious differences between love and affection!) She is alarmed and secretly aghast, as well she may be. He also is secretly aghast. For he has confessed a fact which is an inconvenient fact; and Anglo-Saxons have such a horror of inconvenient facts that they prefer to ignore them even to themselves. To pretend that things are not what they are is regarded by Anglo-Saxons as a proof of strength of mind and wholesomeness of disposition; while to admit that things are indeed what they are is deemed to be either weakness or cynicism. The plain man is incapable of being a cynic; he feels, therefore, that he has been guilty of weakness, and this, of course, makes him very cross.

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"Can't something be done?" says his wife, meaning, "Can't something be done to ameliorate your hard lot?"

(Misguided creature! It was the wrong phrase to use. And any phrase would have been the wrong phrase. She ought to have caressed him, for to a caress there is no answer.)

"You know perfectly well that nothing can be done!" he snaps her up, like a tiger snapping at the fawn. And his eyes, challenging hers, seem to say: "Can I neglect my business? Can I shirk my responsibilities? Where would *you* be if I shirked them? Where would the children be? What about old age, sickness, death, quarter-day, rates, taxes, and your new hat? I have to provide for the rainy day and for the future. I am succeeding, moderately; but let there be no mistake—success means that I must sacrifice present pleasure. Pleasure is all very well for you others, but I——" And then he will finish aloud, with the air of an offended and sarcastic martyr: "Something be done, indeed!"

She sighs. The domestic scene is over.

Now, he may be honestly convinced that nothing can be done. Let us grant as much. But obviously it suits his pride to assume that nothing can be done. To admit the contrary would be to admit that he was leaving something undone, that he had organized his existence clumsily, even that he had made a fundamental miscalculation in the arrangement of his career. He has confessed to grave dissatisfaction. It behoves him, for the sake of his own dignity and reputation, to be quite sure that the grave dissatisfaction is unavoidable, inevitable, and that the blame for it rests with the scheme of the universe, and not with his particular private scheme. His *rôle* is that of the brave, strong, patient victim of an alleged natural law, by reason of which the present must ever be sacrificed to the future, and he discovers a peculiar miserable delight in the *rôle*. "Miserable" is the right adjective.

II.

NEVERTHELESS, in his quality of a wise plain man, he would never agree that any problem of human conduct, however hard and apparently hopeless, could not be solved by dint of sagacity and ingenuity—provided it was the problem of another person! He is quite fearfully good at solving the problems of his friends. Indeed, his friends, recognizing this, constantly go to him for advice. If a friend consulted him and said:—

"Look here, I'm engaged in an enterprise which will absorb all my energies for three years. It will enable me in the meantime to live and to keep my family, but I shall have scarcely a moment's freedom of mind. I may have a little leisure, but of what use is leisure without freedom of mind? As for pleasure, I shall simply forget what it is. My life will be one long struggle. The ultimate profit is extremely uncertain. It may be fairly good; on the other hand, it may be nothing at all."

The plain man, being also blunt, would assuredly interrupt:—

"My dear fellow, what a fool you've been!"

Yet this case is in essence the case of the wise plain man. The chief difference between the two cases is that the wise plain man has enslaved himself for about thirty years instead of three, with naught but a sheer gambling chance of final reward! Not being one of the rare individuals with whom business is a passion, but just an average plain man, he is labouring daily against the grain, stultifying daily one part of his nature, on the supposition that later he will be recompensed. In other words, he is preparing to live, so that at a distant date he may be in a condition to live. He has not effected a compromise between the present and the future. His own complaint—"What pleasure do I get out of life?"—proves that he is completely sacrificing the present to the future. And how elusive is the future! Like the horizon, it always recedes. If, when he was thirty, someone had foretold that at forty-five, with a sympathetic wife and family and an increasing income, he would be as far off happiness as ever, he would have smiled at the prophecy.

The consulting friend, somewhat nettled by the plain man's bluntness, might retort:—

"I may or may not have been a fool. That's not the point. The point is that I am definitely *in* the enterprise, and can't get out of it. And there's nothing to be done."

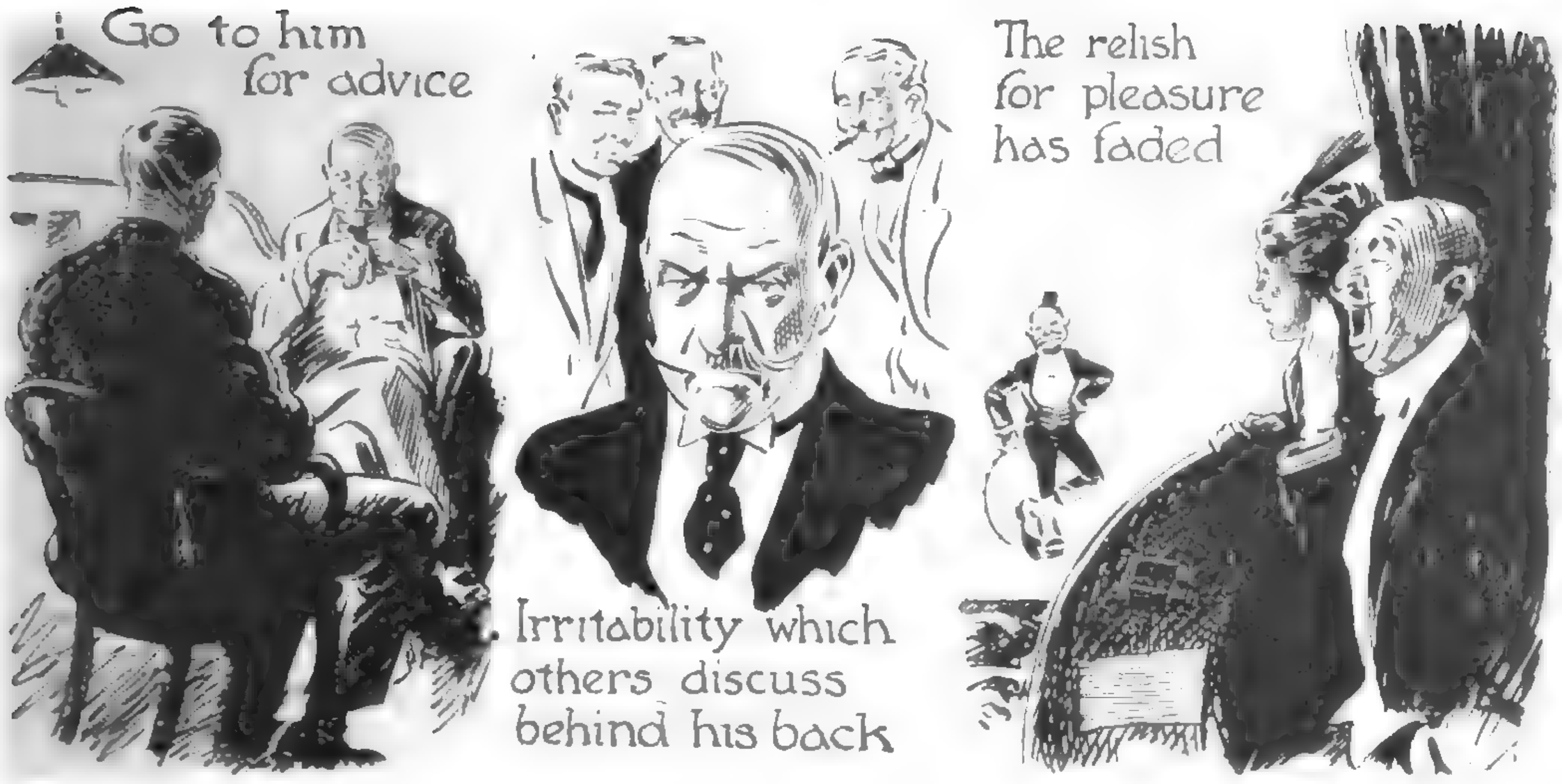
Whereupon the plain man, in an encouraging, enheartening, reasonable tone, would respond:—

"Don't say that, my dear chap. Of course, if you're in it, you're in it. But give me all the details. Let's examine the thing. And allow me to tell you that no case that looks bad is as bad as it looks."

It is precisely in this spirit that the plain man should approach his own case. He should say to himself, in that reasonable tone which he employs to his friend, and which is so impressive: "Let me examine the thing."

And now the plain man who is reading this

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and unwillingly fitting the cap will irately protest: "Do you suppose I haven't examined my own case? Do you suppose I don't understand it? I understand it thoroughly. Who should understand it if I don't? I beg to inform you that I know absolutely all about it."

Still the strong probability is that he has not examined it. The strong probability is that he has just lain awake of a night and felt extremely sorry for himself, and at the same time rather proud of his fortitude. Which process does not amount to an examination; it amounts merely to an indulgence. As for knowing absolutely all about it, he has not even noticed that the habit of feeling sorry for himself and proud of his fortitude is slowly growing on him, and tending to become his sole form of joy—a morbid habit and a sickly joy! He is sublimely unaware of that increasing irritability which others discuss behind his back. He has no suspicion that he is balefully affecting the general atmosphere of his home.

Above all, he does not know that he is losing the capacity for pleasure. Indeed, if it were suggested that such a change was going on in him he would be vexed and distressed. He would cry out: "Don't you make any mistake! I could amuse myself as well as any man, if only I got the chance!" And yet, how many tens of thousands of plain and (as it is called) successful men have been staggered to discover, when ambition was achieved and the daily yoke thrown off and the direct search for immediate happiness commenced, that the relish for pleasure had faded unnoticed away—proof enough that they had neither examined nor understood themselves! There is no more ingenuous soul, in affairs of supreme personal importance, than your wise plain man, whom all his friends consult for his sagacity.

Mind, I am not hereby accusing the plain man of total spiritual blindness—any more than I would accuse him of total physical blindness because he cannot see how he looks to others when he walks into a room. For nobody can see all round himself, nor know absolutely all about his own case; and he who boasts that he can is no better than a fool, despite his wisdom; he is not even at the beginning of any really useful wisdom. But I do accuse my plain man of deliberately shutting his eyes, from pride and from sloth. I do say that he might know a great deal more about his case than he actually does know, if only he would cease from pitying and praising himself in the middle of the night, and tackle the business of self-examination in a rational, vigorous, and honest fashion—not in the dark, but in the sane sunlight. And I do further say that a self-examination thus properly conducted might have results which would stultify those outrageous remarks of his to his wife.

III.

Few people—in fact, very few people indeed—ever realize the priceless value of the ancient counsel: "Know thyself." It seems so trite, so ordinary. It seems so easy to acquire, this knowledge. Does not everyone possess it? Can it not be got by simply sitting down in a chair and yielding to a mood? And yet this knowledge is just about as difficult to acquire as a knowledge

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of Chinese. Certainly nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of a thousand reach the age of sixty before getting the rudiments of it. The majority of us die in almost complete ignorance of it. And none may be said to master it in all its exciting branches. Why, you can choose any of your friends — the wisest of them — and instantly tell him something glaringly obvious about his own character and actions —and be rewarded for your trouble by an indignantly sincere denial! You had noticed it; all his friends had noticed it. But he had not noticed it. Far from having noticed it, he is convinced that it exists only in your malicious imagination. For example, go to a friend whose sense of humour is notoriously imperfect, and say gently to him: "Your sense of humour is imperfect, my friend," and see how he will receive the information! So much for the rarity of self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge is difficult because it demands intellectual honesty. It demands that one shall not blink the facts, that one shall not hide one's head in the sand, and that one shall not be afraid of anything that one may happen to see in looking round. It is rare because it demands that one shall always be able to distinguish between the man one thinks one ought to be and the man one actually is. And it is rare because it demands impartial detachment and a certain quality of fine shamelessness — the shamelessness which confesses openly to oneself and finds a legitimate pleasure in confessing. By way of compensation for its difficulty, the pursuit of self-knowledge happens to be one of the most entrancing of all pursuits, as those who have seriously practised it are well aware. Its interest is inexhaustible and grows steadily. Unhappily, the Anglo-Saxon racial temperament is inimical to it. The Latins like it better. To feel its charm one should listen to a highly-cultivated Frenchman analysing himself for the benefit of an intimate companion. Still, even Anglo-Saxons may try it with advantage.

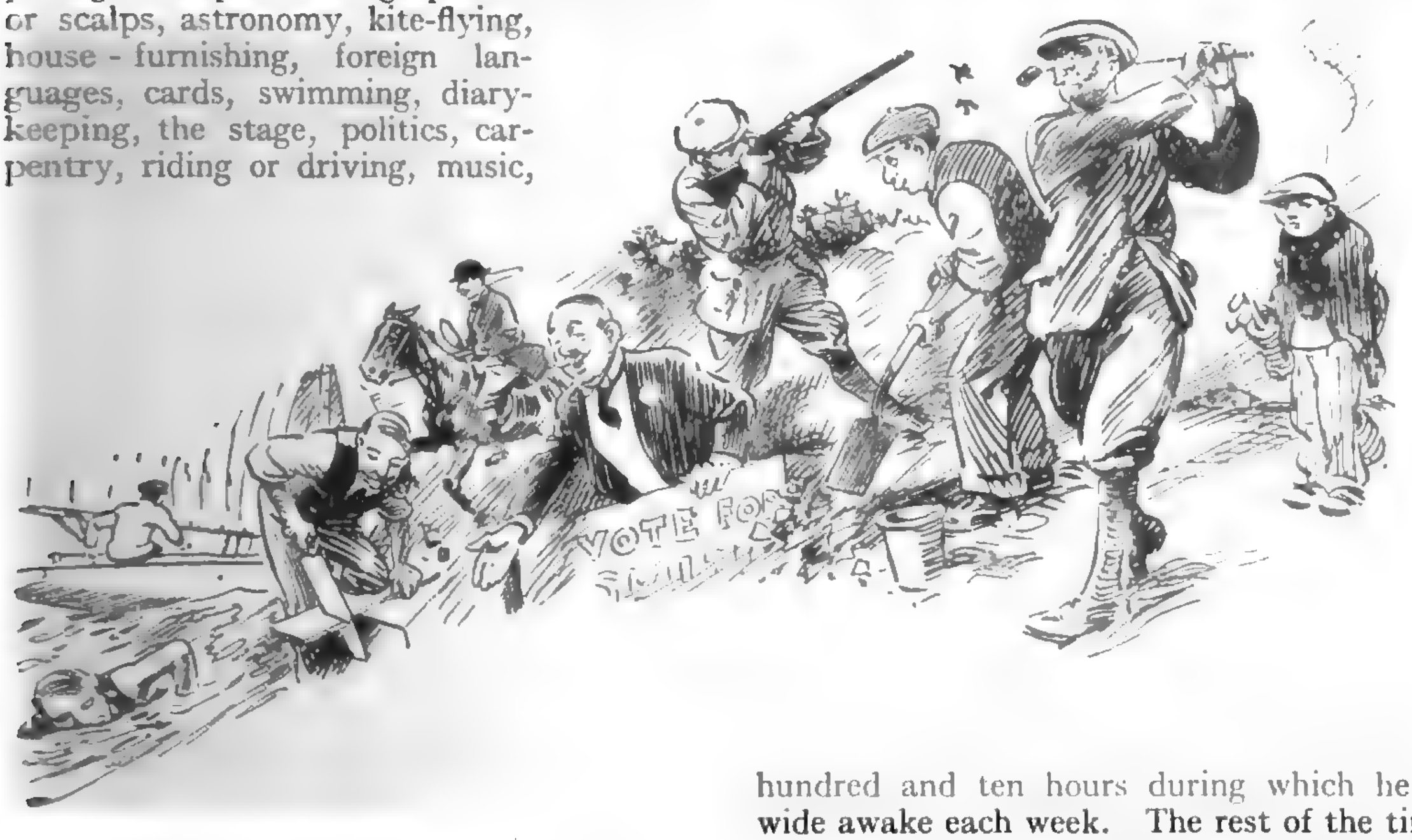
The branch of self-knowledge which is particularly required for the solution of the immediate case of the plain man now under consideration is not a very hard one. It does not involve the recognition of crimes or even of grave faults. It is simply the knowledge of what interests him and what bores him.



Let him enter upon the first section of it with candour. Let him be himself. And let him be himself without shame. Let him ever remember that it is not a sin to be bored by what interests others, or to be interested in what bores others. Let him in this private inquiry give his natural instincts free play, for it is precisely the gradual suppression of his natural instincts which has brought him to his present pass. At first he will probably murmur in a fatigued voice that he cannot think of anything at all that interests him. Then let him dig down among his buried instincts. Let him recall his bright past of dreams, before he had become a victim imprisoned in the eternal groove. Everybody has, or has

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had, a secret desire, a hidden leaning. Let him discover what his is, or was—gardening, philosophy, reading, travel, billiards, raising animals, training animals, killing animals, yachting, collecting pictures or postage-stamps or autographs or snuff-boxes or scalps, astronomy, kite-flying, house-furnishing, foreign languages, cards, swimming, diary-keeping, the stage, politics, carpentry, riding or driving, music,



staying up late, getting up early, tree-planting, tree-felling, town-planning, amateur soldiering, statics, entomology, botany, elocution, children-fancying, cigar-fancying, wife-fancying, placid domestic evenings, conjuring, bacteriology, thought-reading, mechanics, geology, sketching, bell-ringing, theosophy, his own soul, even golf. . . .

I mention a few of the ten million directions in which his secret desire may point or have pointed. I have probably not mentioned the right direction. But he can find it. He can perhaps find several right directions without too much trouble.

And now he says :—

"I suppose you mean me to 'take up' one of these things?"

I do, seeing that he has hitherto neglected so clear a duty. If he had attended to it earlier, and with perseverance, he would not be in the humiliating situation of exclaiming bitterly that he has no pleasure in life.

"But," he resists, "you know perfectly well that I have no time!"

To which I am obliged to make reply :—

"My dear sir, it is not your wife you are talking to. Kindly be honest with me."

I admit that his business is very exhausting and exigent. For the sake of argument I will grant that he cannot safely give it an instant's less time than he is now giving it. But even so his business does not absorb at the outside more than seventy hours of the hundred and ten hours during which he is wide awake each week. The rest of the time he spends either in performing necessary acts in a tedious way or in performing acts which are not only tedious to him, but utterly unnecessary (for his own hypothesis is that he gets no pleasure out of life)—visiting, dinner-giving, cards, newspaper-reading, placid domestic evenings, evenings out, bar-lounging, sitting aimlessly around, dandifying himself, week-ending, theatres, classical concerts, literature, suburban train-travelling, staying up late, being in the swim, even golf. In whatever manner he is whittling away his leisure, it is the wrong manner, for the sole reason that it bores him. Moreover, all whittling of leisure is a mistake. Leisure, like work, should be organized, and it should be organized in large pieces.

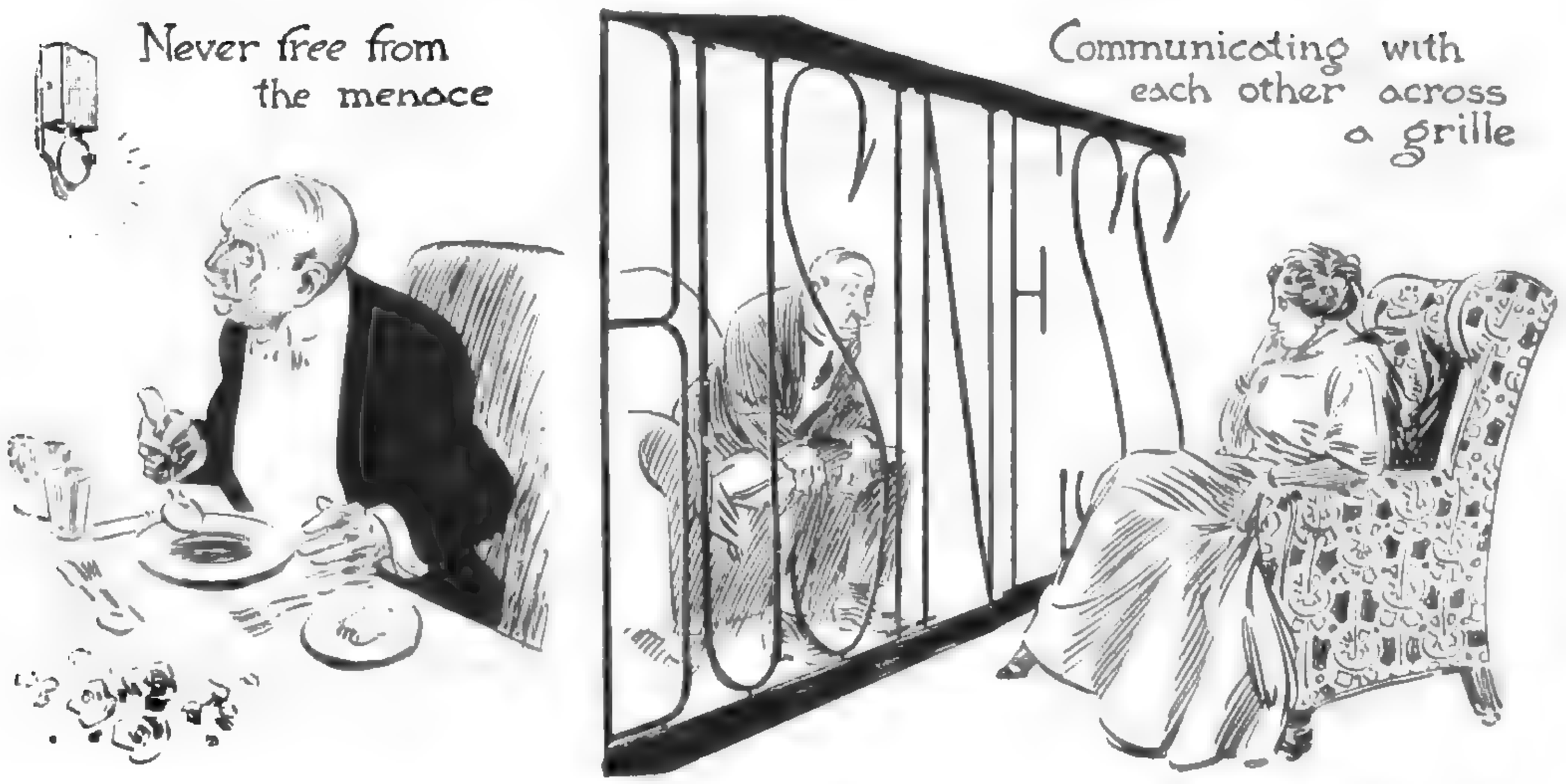
The proper course clearly is to substitute acts which promise to be interesting for acts which have proved themselves to produce nothing but tedium, and to carry out the change with brains, in a business spirit. And the first essential is to recognize that something has definitely to go by the board.

He protests :—

"But I do only the usual things—what everybody else does! And then it's time to go to bed."

The case, however, is *his* case, not everybody else's case. Why should he submit

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to everlasting boredom for the mere sake of acting like everybody else?

He continues in the same strain :—

"But you are asking me to change my whole life—at my age!"

Nothing of the sort! I am only suggesting that he should begin to live.

And then finally he cries :—

"It's too drastic. I haven't the pluck!"

Now we are coming to the real point.

IV.

THE machinery of his volition, in all directions save one, has been clogged, through persistent neglect, due to over-specialization. His mind needs to be cleared, and it can be cleared—it will clear itself—if regular periods of repose are enforced upon it. As things are, it practically never gets a holiday from business. I do not mean that the plain man is always thinking about his business; but I mean that he is always liable to think about his business, that his business is always present in his mind, even if dormant there, and that at every opportunity, if the mind happens to be inactive, it sits up querulously and insists on attention. The man's mind is indeed rather like an unfortunate domestic servant who, though not always at work, is never off duty, never night or day free from the menace of a damnable electric bell; and it is as stale as that servant. His business is capable of ringing the bell when the man is eating his soup, when he is sitting alone with his wife on a warm summer evening, and especially when he wakes just before dawn to pity and praise himself.

But he defends the position :—

"My business demands much reflection—constant watchfulness."

Well, in the first place, an enterprise which demands watchfulness day and night from the same individual is badly organized, and should be reorganized. It runs contrary to the common sense of Nature. And, in the second place, his defence is insincere. He does not submit to the eternal preoccupation because he thinks he ought, but simply because he cannot help it. How often, especially just before the dawn, has he not longed to be delivered from the perfectly futile preoccupation, so that he might go to sleep again—and failed to get free! How often, in the midst of some jolly gathering, has he not felt secretly desolate because the one tyrannic topic would run round and round in his mind, just like a clockwork mouse, accomplishing no useful end, and making impossible any genuine participation in the gaiety that environs him!

Instead of being necessary to the success of his business, this morbid preoccupation is positively detrimental to his business. He would think much more usefully, more powerfully, more creatively, about his business if during at least thirteen consecutive hours each day he never thought of it at all.

And there is still a further point in this connection. Let him imagine how delightful it must be for the people in the home which he has made, the loving people whom he loves and to whom in theory he is devoting his career, to feel continually that he only sees them obscurely through the haze emanating from his business! Why—worse!—even when he is sitting with his wife, he and she

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might as well be communicating with each other across a grille against which a turnkey is standing and listening to every word said! Let him imagine how flattering for her! She might be more flattered, at any rate more thrilled, if she knew that instead of thinking about his business he was thinking about another woman. Could he shut the front door every afternoon on his business, the effect would not only be beneficial upon it and upon him, but his wife would smile the warm smile of wisdom justified. Like most women, she has a firmer grasp of the essence of life than the man upon whom she is dependent. She knows with her heart (what he only knows with his brain) that business, politics, and "all that sort of thing" are secondary to real existence, the mere preliminaries of it. She would rejoice, in the blush of the compliment he was paying her, that he had at last begun to comprehend the ultimate values!

So far as I am aware, there is no patent desire for suddenly gaining that control of the mind which will enable one to free it from an obsession such as the obsession of the plain man. The desirable end can, however, be achieved by slow degrees, and by an obvious method which contains naught of the miraculous. If the victim of the obsession will deliberately try to think of something else, or to think of nothing at all—every time he catches himself in the act of thinking about his business out of hours, he certainly will, sooner or later—probably in about a fortnight—cure the obsession, or at least get the upper hand of it. The treatment demands perseverance, but it emphatically does not demand an impossibly powerful effort. It is an affair of trifling pertinacious touches.

It is a treatment easier to practise during daylight, in company, when distractions are plentiful, than in the solitude of the night. Triumphantly to battle with an obsession at night, when the vitality is low and the egoism intensified, is extremely difficult. But the small persistent successes of the day will gradually have their indirect influence on the night. A great deal can also be done by simple resolute suggestion. Few persons seem to know—what is, nevertheless, a fact—that the most effective moment for making resolves is in the comatose calm which precedes going to sleep. The entire organism is then in a passive state, and more permanently receptive of the imprint of volition than at any other period of the twenty-four hours. If regularly at that moment the man says clearly and imperiously to himself, "I will not allow my business to preoccupy me at home; I will not allow my business to preoccupy me at home; I will not allow my business to preoccupy me at home," he will be astonished at the results; which results, by the way, are reached by subconscious and therefore unperceived channels whose workings we can only guess at.

And when the obsession is beaten, destroyed, he will find himself not merely fortified with the necessary pluck and initiative for importing a new interest into his existence. His instincts of their own accord will be asking for that interest, for they will have been set free.

V.

In choosing a distraction—that is to say, in choosing a rival to his business—he should select some pursuit whose nature differs as much as possible from the nature of his business, and which will bring into activity another side of his character. If his business is monotonous, demanding care and solicitude rather than irregular intense efforts of the brain, then let his distraction be such as will make a powerful call upon his brain. But if, on the other hand, the course of his business runs in crises that string up the brain to its tightest strain, then let his distraction be a foolish and merry one. Many men fall into the error of assuming that their hobbies must be as dignified and serious as their vocations, though surely the example of the greatest philosophers ought to have taught them better! They seem to imagine that they should continually be improving themselves, in either body or mind. If they take up a sport, it is because the sport may improve their health. And if the hobby is intellectual it must needs be employed to improve their brain. The fact is that their conception of self-improvement is too narrow. In their restricted sense of the phrase, they possibly don't need improving; they possibly are already improved to the point of being a nuisance to their fellow-creatures; possibly what they need is worsening. In the broad and full sense of the phrase self-improvement, a course of self-worsening might improve them. I have known men—and everybody has known them—who would approach nearer to perfection if they could only acquire a little carelessness, a little absent-mindedness, a little illogicalness, a little irrational and infantile gaiety, a little unscrupulousness in the matter of the time of day. These considerations should be weighed before certain

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hobbies are dismissed as being unworthy of a plain man's notice.

Then comes the hour of decision, in which the wise plain man should exert all that force of will for which he is famous in his house. For this hour may be of supreme importance —may be the close of one epoch in his life and the beginning of another. The more volitional energy he can concentrate in it, the more likely is he to succeed in the fine enterprise of his own renaissance. He must *resolve* with as much intensity of will as he once put into the resolution which sent him to propose marriage to his wife. And, indeed, he must be ready to treat his hobby somewhat as though it were a woman desired—with splendid and uncalculating generosity. He must shower money on it, and, what is more, he must shower time on it. He must do the thing properly. A hobby is not a hobby until it is glorified, until some real sacrifice has been made for it. If he has chosen a hobby that is costly, both in money and in time, if it is a hobby difficult for a busy and prudent man to follow, all the better. If it demands that his business shall suffer a little, and that his lifelong habits of industry shall seem to be jeopardized, again all the better. For, you know, despite his timid fears, his business will not suffer, and lifelong habits, even good ones, are not easily jeopardized. One of the most precious jewels of advice ever offered to the plain man was that he should acquire industrious habits, and then try to lose them ! He will soon find that he cannot lose them, but the transient struggles against them will tend always to restore the sane balance of his nature.

He must deliberately arrange pleasures for himself in connection with his hobby, and as often as possible. Once a week at least his programme should comprise some item of relaxation to which he can look forward with impatience because he has planned it, and because he has compelled seemingly more urgent matters to give way to it; and look forward to it he must, tasting it in advance, enjoying it twice over ! Thus may the appetite for pleasure, the ability really to savour it, be restored—and incidentally kept in good trim for full use when old age arrives and he enters the lotus-land. And with it all, when the hour of enjoyment comes, he must insist on his mind being free ; expelling every preoccupation, nonchalantly accepting risks like a youth, he must abandon himself to the hour. Let him practise lightheartedness as though it were charity. Indeed, it is charity—to his household, for instance. Ask his household.

He says :—

"All this is very dangerous. My friends won't recognize me. I may go too far. I may become an idler and a spendthrift."

Have no fear.

Next month Mr. Arnold Bennett will make a most interesting contribution to our series of articles, entitled "MY REMINISCENCES."

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THE CHINESE MIRROR.

By HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

Illustrated by Gilbert Holiday.

I.

"IT'S the best bedroom in the house," declared George Rochford.

Lord Rochford, George's cousin, and the head of the family, exchanged a smile with his wife as he murmured: "No complaints, my dear George, I assure you."

Indeed, the room was charming, with an atmosphere of dignity about it which may be found in ancient houses not suffered to fall into decay. Finely proportioned, panelled in oak, with a deep oriel window and a wide fireplace in which some logs were smouldering, it combined happily splendour with comfort. The vast four-poster bed was hung with crimson brocade; the furniture was Chippendale of the best period; the carpet had come long ago from Aubusson; and above the chimneypiece hung a beautiful lozenge-shaped Chinese mirror, the work of a master-craftsman of the K'ang Hsi dynasty.

"Halloa!" said George. "They ought to have drawn the curtains."

Lady Rochford answered him.

"I told my maid not to shut out the moonlight."

These three persons had entered the room together, George, as host, leading the way. He presented pleasantly the type to be found wherever hounds run fast over stiff country, a jolly, red-faced, well-nourished squire, whose only grievance was accumulating weight. In salient contrast, Lord Rochford stood beside him, tall, slender, with a pale face delicately modelled, obviously a man of sensibility and refinement. George wore the evening coat of a famous hunt; Lord Rochford was in black. Lady Rochford's gown of white satin belonged to a bride. The men might have been anything between thirty and thirty-five; the woman was hardly out of her teens, as distinguished in appearance as her husband—not quite a beauty, but extraordinarily attractive by reason of her graceful bearing and the intelligence which sparkled in her clear hazel eyes. Upon entering the room she had crossed to the fireplace and, bending down, spread her hands before the softly glowing logs. She did not move when George exclaimed, loudly:—

"Look here, you two! I want to make it plain that you are occupying this spooky room against my wish and against my judgment."

"Good old George!" said Lord Rochford.

"I tell you, I wouldn't sleep in it for fifty pounds."

Lady Rochford turned to look at him. Her voice had an amused inflection as she said, gently:—

"But you won't tell us what has happened."

George replied explosively:—

"Because I can't. That's the spooky part. I don't know anything definite. When I took the place six months ago, we put the two kids in here. They saw nothing."

Lord Rochford laughed.

"Healthy little beggars like your kids never do see anything."

"Hold hard! Their nurse saw something."

"What did the nurse see?" asked Lady Rochford.

"That's the exasperating part of the story. The woman was a sensible sort, middle-aged, quiet, and absolutely to be trusted. She

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refused to say a word, and left my service the next day."

"Suppressed hysteria," suggested Lord Rochford.

"Her goin' upset the other servants."

"Naturally. Same stale old story."

George continued, speaking in the hard, aggressive tone of a man who detests ridicule.

"I shoved old Archie Sinclair into that four-poster when he came to us for a few days' cubbin'. You must admit, Arthur, that Archie is a tough nut. He spent one hour in that bed, and the rest of the night in the dressing-room. And he left us next mornin'. Ran mute, too—confound him!"

"Did himself too well at dinner."

"The next cove was a parson. He did tell us something."

For the first time Lady Rochford betrayed interest. She lifted her head sharply.

"Ah!"

"It seems that whatever happens happens in the dark."

Lord Rochford laughed again. He had slept in many rooms reputed to be haunted. But he had seen no ghosts.

"Parson bolted too, lookin' like a hunted cat. The second investigator of what he called psychical phenomena was Gideon Murgatroyd."

The illustrious name fell triumphantly from George's lips, and he perceived that he had made an impression at last. The head of the family, altogether too cool a card, was genuinely impressed.

"Are you speaking of the surgeon?"

"I am. He ran down to have a look at my knee just before Christmas. I told him about the parson, and he insisted, like you, upon movin' in. He moved out bright and early next mornin' and he told me to—to——"

"Yes?"

"To smash that Chinese mirror."

As he spoke George pointed dramatically at the mirror. Deliberately he had worked up to his climax. Against his protests a nice couple had chosen to occupy this room, although another had been prepared for them. Weakly he, the host, had consented. Nevertheless, throughout dinner, sitting next to the bride, and sensible of an increasing interest in and liking for so charming a creature, he had said to himself that it wasn't quite fair on her, a mere girl, obviously a woman of imagination.

"Smash that mirror?" repeated Lady Rochford. She stared at its shimmering surface as George went on:—

"Of course, it isn't mine to smash."

"And it's a gem," said Lady Rochford.

"I was told that it was loot from the Imperial Palace at Peking, and Murgatroyd asked me some questions about it. He saw something in it. *What*, he refused to say. And, for a man in his profession, he talked a lot of bosh about occultism, which I couldn't follow at all. Well, there you are! I don't believe in the common or garden ghost, but something cryptic takes place in this room."

Lord Rochford glanced at his watch. It was late, and the well-meaning George was becoming rather a bore.

"I'm keener than ever," he declared.

"Oh, yes," said his wife.

George surrendered.

"Right! You see that bell?" He indicated a bell to the right of the big bed. "It communicates with my room. Now, if anything happens, ring it, and I shall be with you in two jiffs. The other bell"—he pointed to an old-fashioned rope with a crimson tassel—"will bring a servant."

"Much obliged, my dear fellow."

George turned to the lady with a slightly nervous laugh.

"There is a comfortable bed in the dressing-room, and, if you'll take a tip from me, Joan, you will sleep there. Got everything you want?"

"Yes."

"Then—good night."

As George moved towards the door the head of the family—and as such, be it noted, Lord Rochford commanded his cousin's respect—said a last word.

"Thank you, George. I'll promise you this: if I do see anything really uncanny I shall consult some brain specialist. Very odd things happen, but they happen to odd people, whose minds are out of working order. Good night, my dear fellow."

"You're thrusters, both of you! And I console myself with the reflection that my kiddies saw nothing. I don't want the gossips to say that I put the head of the family into a tight place. Good night."

He went out, and they heard him whistle as he walked down the corridor. As the door closed behind his broad back the expression upon Lord Rochford's face changed. The look of amused derision vanished. He met his wife's glance, and they smiled at each other. The gossips to whom their cousin had alluded were maliciously of opinion that a penniless girl had married a man very much older than herself for material blessings, but the most malicious of these, beholding the pair at this moment, would have admitted

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instantly that here were true lovers tenderly and passionately devoted to each other. Rochford kissed the lips that came eagerly to meet his; he held her head between his hands, gazing deep into the hazel eyes which mirrored faithfully his image. Then he whispered: "George is a good, kind fellow, isn't he?" As she smiled acquiescence he continued, reflectively: "I stand between him and many things that men value, and our marriage, Joan, must have made a difference, and yet he has always been the same cheery, kind pal; and I could see that he was sorely concerned at our sleeping in this jolly old room. Well, he is quite right about one thing—you must pass the night in the dressing-room."



"AS HE SPOKE GEORGE POINTED DRAMATICALLY AT THE MIRROR."

"Oh, no."

"Oh, yes. That absurd yarn about Sir Gideon Murgatroyd impressed you. I saw the pupils of your dear eyes dilating."

"I shall stay here with you, Arthur. Pop into the dressing-room, and let me get my things off."

"You are quite sure you don't funk it a tiny bit?"

"Quite, quite sure."

She pushed him towards the door of the dressing-room, murmuring, "I'm so sleepy."

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"You're a plucky darling! If we both see something——"

"No such luck," she replied, gaily.

"Shall I ring for your maid?"

"Don't. I told her to go to bed, because," she laughed softly, "I want somebody else to brush my hair. Hurry up!"

He lingered for another moment, loath to leave her.

"The honeymoon was up yesterday," she remarked.

He replied fervently: "An enchanting month, with nothing to mar it."

She sighed.

"A sigh, Joan? Why?"

She smiled at him reassuringly. "I sighed, Arthur, because we have been almost too happy."

"The honeymoon must go on."

She looked at him attentively.

"If it could——"

Her charming face had grown serious, reflective, as if she were trying to analyse happiness. Profoundly in sympathy with her, he said, gravely: "Do you doubt me or yourself?"

"As if I could doubt you!"

He shifted uneasily beneath her tender glance, sensible that he stood upon a giddy pinnacle of her building, wearing a mantle of her fashioning. Tentatively he continued:—

"If I were other than what you think me to be?"

His tone, rather than the words, puzzled her. But she said, proudly: "I know my husband."

He shrugged his shoulders, as the slightly derisive smile flickered once more about his lips.

"Is it possible," he asked, "for even you to know the man as apart from his trappings? Strip me of my position, my rank, and the good things that go with these. Can you see me without them?"

"It is difficult," she admitted. "Naturally, I am proud of those good things. They count, oh, yes, but they can be counted also—turned into pounds, shillings, and pence. What remains under the trappings is above price, far beyond my reckoning."

She spoke so simply, with such sincerity and feeling, that he was deeply moved. He kissed her with an odd fierceness, exclaiming: "For Heaven's sake don't mount me on a pedestal! Now I shall leave you alone for a few minutes with a clear conscience, because we have George's solemn assurance that nothing happens when the lights are on."

He went into his dressing-room. Lady Rochford began to take off her ornaments, the diamonds and pearls which were part of his trappings, historic jewels worn by generations of women who had married into an ancient and honourable house. Having done this, she examined herself in the mirror, smiling because she knew that trinkets added nothing to her attractiveness. But she remarked that the surface of the mirror was dull and slightly damp. She beheld a blurred image. With her pocket-handkerchief she wiped the glass, and, not quite satisfied, struck a match and lit the candles which stood upon each side of the mirror. Then she went back to the dressing-table. As she approached it both candles flickered and went out. The sudden extinguishing provoked a startled exclamation, a penetrating "Oh!" Her husband opened the dressing-room door and saw her staring at the candles.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"Please don't make fun of me. I lit those candles—and—and—they went out."

"And you screamed."

"Arthur—I didn't. But it is—*odd*."

"Odd? Nothing odd that I can see. These old manor houses are confoundedly draughty, and the curtains of that window are not drawn. I'll light the candles so that they won't go out. Where are the matches?"

She handed the box to him, and he noticed that her fingers were trembling. Very carefully he lighted the candles, allowing a little melted wax to drip from each. They burned clearly and steadily.

"There! I'll bet you sixpence that they don't go out."

Lady Rochford was staring at the mirror. She touched it with the tip of a finger, saying, nervously:—

"I noticed just now that the glass seemed damp, so I wiped a few inches of it. I see that it has clouded over again."

"Of course it's damp. Let me wipe it."

He fetched a towel and scrubbed it thoroughly.

"It's dry enough now."

He turned as he spoke, and saw that she was very pale. In his kindest, most persuasive manner he said:—

"Look here, Joan, you are frightened, you poor little dear! Take what you want for the night and nip into the dressing-room."

She shook her head valiantly.

"Good Lord! You're trembling, merely because two candles have flickered out—the most natural thing in the world."

He had his back to the chimneypiece as he spoke, and was smiling at his wife. She

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faltered: "Arthur — they have gone out again."

He swung round.

"By Jove, so they have!"

He spread out his hands, feeling for some draught, some intermittent current of air.

"Is the window open?"

"No. Arthur—I *am* frightened. See, the mirror is quite dull again. Oh, I can't stand it!"

He replied, soothingly: "Of course you can't."

Then, without another word, he crossed to the bed, taking from it the nightgown and dressing-gown that lay upon it. Smilingly he placed these upon her arm, patting her shoulder.

"No arguments! You pop off. I'll stick this out alone."

"Arthur, please come with me."

"I couldn't face George's grin to-morrow. Off you go!"

Gently but masterfully he half pushed her towards the dressing-room. Upon the threshold she murmured:—

"Will you call me if anything does happen?"

"Perhaps."

"I won't go till you promise."

"I promise."

He kissed her and shut the door between them. For a few seconds he stood still, examining carefully every object in the room. He saw that the fire had burned low, and was about to replenish it when his face hardened. Beholding his face at this moment, none could have doubted that here was a man of inflexible resolution. He walked swiftly to the door leading into the passage and switched off the electric light. The room became dark, but there was light enough from the window and the smouldering logs to see the mirror. He sat down opposite to it, staring at its surface, conscious of an intense mental alertness, a quickening of all the senses. He could hear, for example, the ticking of his watch, and he could smell what he had not yet noticed—a faint but unmistakable odour of drugs, an odour disagreeable but antiseptic, which suggested the cool, clean wards of a hospital.

A minute or so may have passed. And then he made an odd discovery. The ticking became louder and more insistent. He put his hand into his waistcoat-pocket, to find that the watch was not there. And at once he remembered that he had laid it upon the table in the dressing-room. And the ticking was that of a clock. But no clock was in the room. Also the odour of carbolic acid became stronger. The co-ordination of this double appeal to the senses brought to mind a painful scene—a death-bed. He had watched the slow passing of one very dear to him, of one sunk into the merciful oblivion of coma. He had sat during many hours waiting for the inevitable change, with faculties dulled by sorrow, with senses that recorded two things alone—the solemn tick of a clock and the pungent odour of a strong antiseptic.

Suddenly a third sense was tremendously affected. The surface of the mirror became brighter, and then amorphous shadows passed across it. Rochford leaned forward. The vision inspired in him amazement, anguish, and, finally, terror. A cry broke from him.

Instantly the door of the dressing-room opened, and Lady Rochford entered. She saw that her husband was sitting huddled up on the couch at the foot of the bed. He had covered his face with his hands. She heard a sob of horror and pain, and realized that he was oblivious of her presence. Instinctively she glanced at the mirror. The light from the dressing-room illumined it clearly, and she could see reflected in it the door leading to the passage, a tall chest of drawers, the edge of the crimson hangings, and nothing more. She touched Rochford's shoulder, calling him by name.

"Arthur! What have you seen?"

At her touch he shuddered; at her voice he stood up, still trembling.

"I saw—I saw——"

"What?"

With a violent effort he regained control of his limbs and features. In a chill, dull voice he answered:—

"I can't tell you."

"But—you *must*."

Her voice rang out imperatively. He became oddly sensible that she seemed larger, a woman grown to her full stature, his equal in mind and body, possibly the stronger personality of the two. Then the strength that informed her voice, the virtue that beamed in her fine eyes, seemed to pass into him. He drew himself up, speaking slowly, but with dignity.

"I have seen nothing, Joan, except the disordered fancies of a mind less sane than I had supposed it to be." He paused for a moment, and as she said nothing he added, decisively: "To-morrow I shall put myself into the hands of a doctor."

"You tell me that you have seen nothing?"

"Nothing which cannot be explained."

"Then please explain it to me."

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His eyes met hers with a certain defiance. Very steadily they gazed at each other. Fear seemed to have left her, and colour had flowed back into her cheeks. Far otherwise was it with him. She saw the sweat break upon his forehead; his eyes fell moodily as he said, listlessly :—

"I can't explain."

"You mean—is it possible?—that you won't?"

"Joan, for pity's sake don't torment me."

He sank back upon the sofa. Instantly she was on her knees beside him, the ministering angel, aflame to console, thinking only of his wounds, not her own. But she perceived, with an ever-increasing dismay, that her whispered words of love, her tender caresses, evoked no response. He sat impassive beneath them. She rose from her knees.

"Arthur"—her voice was soft, but clear—"is this horror, for it is a horror, going to stand between our love for each other?"

He repeated the words stammeringly :—



"ARTHUR! WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN?"

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"Our l-love for each other?"

"Dearest, there can be no perfect love without trust. I entreat you to trust me."

He remained silent, looking at the mirror, not at her. She whispered: "Do you see anything now?"

"Nothing, nothing. What I saw, Joan, was a memory visualized, a very poignant memory. That is all."

"A memory? May I not share that memory?"

"Not yet," he faltered.

"The memory, you say, was visualized in that glass, a memory which seems to have affected you most terribly. And you, the sanest, the coolest of men, talk to me of a disordered mind. I refuse to believe that your mind is disordered. You saw something in that mirror. You saw what others have seen."

"No, positively no! Others have not seen what I thought I saw."

"Sir Gideon Murgatroyd saw something; Mr. Sinclair saw something. Now, I have a suggestion to make: I will sit beside you on this sofa, and in the darkness I will gaze with you into that mirror. Then, if I do not see what you see, I shall know that your mind is disordered. What do you say?"

"It would be a real test," he answered, slowly.

She seated herself beside him.

"Please turn out the lights."

For the second time her courage infused energy and courage into him. He seemed to have recovered his self-control as he said, tenderly:—

"Joan, are you strong enough for such a test? Is it fair on you?"

"Nothing else will satisfy me. Turn out the electrics!"

"If you should see what terrified me?"

"We should see it together. I am not afraid any longer. Perhaps my love for you has cast out my fear."

He took her hand and kissed it.

"So be it," he said, solemnly.

He left her rigidly upright on the sofa, and walked towards the door. But he paused at the corner of the great bed and turned. When he spoke she noted that his voice was quietly normal, but she marked an inflection of entreaty in the familiar tones, a supplication almost, both new and strange.

"I want to make a sort of bargain with you."

"A bargain—with me?"

"If nothing comes of this experience, and I feel a conviction that nothing will come of it, will you let matters rest as they are? Will you believe, as I believe, that I have suffered from some monstrous nightmare?"

"You called it a memory just now."

"A nightmare is a memory distorted." He continued, with greater urgency: "Even you, Joan, might shrink from telling me some horrid dream, some appalling vision of night and darkness from which you have waked shuddering with terror, the greater because you were unable to define it."

She answered him frankly, without hesitation.

"If we see nothing, Arthur, I shall share with you the conviction that we have let our imaginations run amok to-night, and I consent to let the matter rest there; on the other hand——"

"Yes?"

"If—if that mirror reveals to both of us something, anything, beyond the reflections we see there now, you must promise to share with me, as I promise to share with you, the burden of that revelation."

"You will see nothing," he said, hastily.

The slight emphasis on the personal pronoun escaped her.

"If I see nothing," she replied, "I shall ask no more questions."

He walked to the door and switched off the light.

II.

ROCHFORD came back to his wife and sat down. She slipped her hand into his, and noticed how cold his hand was compared with her own. In the dim firelight she could see that his gaze was fixed upon the mirror, in which, so far as she was aware, no change had as yet taken place. She felt no fear for herself, absorbed by anxiety for her husband. She stole another glance at his face, white and rigid with concentration. And then suddenly his grasp tightened.

"Do you hear anything?" he whispered.

She listened. Yes, she could hear a faint droning.

"Do you hear a clock ticking?" he asked.

"No; I hear a sound like the humming of bees."

"Joan, can you smell anything?"

"Yes, I do smell something."

"What?"

"It is quite fragrant."

"Fragrant?" He spoke irritably. "It is an abominable odour of drugs."

"Oh, no! I smell lavender, the scent of a lovely garden in September. Ah!"

The exclamation fell sharply from her. The surface of the mirror had become luminous.

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Unconsciously she withdrew her hand and leaned forward, her lips parted, her bosom rising and falling with excitement.

"You see something?" he said, hoarsely.

Her voice was steadier than his as she answered: "Yes, I see the garden of my old home."

"I see a room—a bedroom."

"Arthur, it's a garden. Surely you see what I see?"

He made no reply, leaning forward, peering into the mysterious glass which revealed to each a vision so different. The woman gasped.

"What do you see now, Joan?"

She answered constrainedly: "The face of a man."

"You are sure that it is not the face of a woman?"

"Absolutely." Her voice quavered oddly, and she wondered whether her husband could hear the beating of her heart. Fear possessed her. In a moment she knew that she would scream.

"A woman's face is staring at me," muttered Rochford. "She is beckoning—beckoning."

He rose up and moved a step nearer to the chimneypiece, holding out his hands, speaking in a low voice broken by emotion, speaking not to his wife, but to the face in the mirror.

"I promised—yes, I promised."

At his voice, hardly recognizable, a palsy shook her limbs. She desired to move, but could not. Her tongue defied the craving to scream.

Rochford had moved nearer to the mirror. She could hear him speaking in the same hoarse whisper, but his words were inarticulate. Moreover, to her eyes the glass had grown dull; the vision had faded. The significance of what she had seen ceased to challenge her attention. She became absorbed in watching the man she loved, who of a sudden seemed remote from and alien to her. Dominating these confused impressions was the yearning to break the spell, to tear him from that unknown woman with whom he was pleading desperately as if for his very life.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I can't bear it any longer!"

When she spoke power returned to her limbs. She rose to her feet as he turned to confront her, and for an instant they stared in silence deep into each other's souls. Upon each face terror had convulsed the features, an evil fear of—what? She hardly recognized him. He gazed at her defiantly, almost savagely, with a frowning interrogation, discovering in her some strange woman. It may have been the effect of the dim light, but the clear pallor of his skin had become a dingy yellow, as if the vital fluid had ceased to circulate. The crowning horror to her was the certainty that some devil possessed and was tearing him.

She moved swiftly to the door and switched on the electric current. Rochford passed his hand across his eyes and laughed derisively. Then he said:—

"What did you see in that cursed glass?"

"I will tell you everything."

"You told me that you saw a man."

"Yes"

He seized her hand.

"I can guess what you saw. When we became engaged, when I kissed you, you swore that I was the first. Was I? Was I?" he repeated, fiercely, as she remained silent.

"N-no," she faltered.

"Then you—you lied to me?"

She raised her eyes to his.

"I lied to you, Arthur, because I loved you so much."

"Go on. What else did you see?"

"Something that happened two years ago. I was walking in the garden at home, picking lavender. A man was stopping in the house, an old friend of the family, somebody I trusted as I trusted my father. I was only seventeen, an innocent child. He kissed me."

"And then?"

"He kissed me brutally. I tore myself away from him; I rushed to my room; I scrubbed my lips, but the stain remained. It was horrible! The awful thing to me was that he, my father's friend, had done it. And when you asked me if a man had ever kissed my lips with passion, I—I lied to you. I couldn't tell you the humiliating, shameful truth."

"Is that—all?"

"All?" she repeated, unable to interpret the expression upon his face.

"A man kissed you."

"A man? He was a beast."

Rochford laughed, and the laugh relieved the tension, because it was entirely mirthful. He became himself again.

"Joan, dear, what an absolutely idiotic story!"

"But I lied about it to you, and that lie has rankled. I have thought of it a thousand times."

"You scrubbed your dear little lips, but the stain remained. I know how to remove it, you fond, foolish woman."

Still holding her hand, he drew her towards him. She released herself gently, but inexorably.

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"One moment, Arthur. I have told you what was a great shame and misery to me, although it appears negligible to you. Now it is your turn. What did you see in that mirror?"

"Joan, don't ask me. I entreat you."

"You promised."

"I beseech you to release me from that promise. I saw what you saw, what Murgatroyd saw—a scene out of a past that I had thought buried." He continued hurriedly, dreading an interruption, although he selected his words with care. As a debater in the House of Commons, before he succeeded to the family honours, a certain lucidity of speech had distinguished him.

"It has been held by wiser men than I that nothing is destroyed irrevocably, that—given the right conditions—what has been may be reproduced again, a theory which explains many mysteries transcending ordinary experience. The mystery of that mirror may lie in us. It would seem that the persons who have gazed into it, under certain conditions, have beheld some scene in their previous lives which they have believed to be buried in their own hearts.



"I PROMISED—YES, I PROMISED."

The natural solution is that the whole thing is an effect of conscience."

"There is more than that, Arthur."

"Possibly. How it was made I cannot guess, but I do not know how the receivers

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and transmitters of the Marconi instruments are made."

"And I do not care," she said, sharply. "What concerns me vitally is this: our happiness is at stake."

"Our happiness?"

"I am no longer a child, but a woman, Arthur, with a woman's passionate love and a woman's jealousy. You saw a woman's face in that glass; you spoke to a woman in words I couldn't hear, in words broken by intense emotion."

He passed his hand across his forehead.

"Did I? I don't remember."

"I shared a past with you that I loathed. Share your past with me, even if you loved it."

He opened his lips to speak, and then closed them. She came nearer, moved by his distress, but determined to hold him to his pledge.

"Was that woman very dear to you, Arthur?"

"Yes."

He spoke curtly, but not harshly, and his expression softened.

"Oh!"

Ingenuously she put her hand to her heart, wounded the more deeply because he appeared to be unconscious of the pain his admission inflicted. She detected tears in his eyes.

"Who was this woman?"

"She is dead. Ask me no more, dearest. My secret is not what you think it to be."

She hesitated, completely puzzled by his manner, by his strange air of detachment. Torn by conflicting emotions, she muttered:—

"Can you swear that this secret is no concern of mine?"

He did not answer.

"Ah! you can't. If you could I would leave it at that willingly, gladly; but it *does* concern me."

"It does," he admitted, reluctantly.

"Directly or indirectly?"

"Directly and indirectly."

"Arthur, you must share it with me."

She laid her hand gently upon his arm, constraining him to sit down beside her. Then she slipped her hand into his with a pretty confidence, and a faint beguiling smile upon her lips. He said, vehemently:—

"This secret has been a dreadful burden to me. It will hurt you cruelly; more—alter your life."

"I want to share all your burdens."

She pressed closer to him, trying to make him understand that no woman, dead or alive, could come between them. He returned the tender pressure, staring intently at her face, as he said:—

"The woman I saw in that mirror was my mother."

"Your mother!"

"I have never talked to you about my mother."

"That has hurt me a little."

"We were tremendous pals. I regarded her as a kind, sympathetic elder sister. She knew me in and out. I thought that I knew her."

He paused, turning his eyes from his wife, who said, gently: "I have heard her called a saint."

He continued slowly: "One subject between us was barred. She never mentioned my father. As you know, she was separated from him. I had to spend part of my holidays at Rochford, a week here and there. I loved the place, but I hated the owner of it."

"My poor Arthur!"

"I remember thinking as a boy that it would be horrible to grow up like him. Later, after I left Eton, I discovered that he had been brutal to her. She could have divorced him, but she wouldn't. You spoke of her just now as a saint. Saints are often made out of sinners. When my mother lay dying she sent for me. I was abroad, and I arrived only just in time. She could hardly speak; but she had lingered on in terrible pain to whisper the truth to me. She told me that I was not the son of the late Lord Rochford."

"What?"

"The real Lord Rochford is George."

"Good heavens!"

"My mother entreated me to abandon a name that wasn't mine, to give up the old place and all that went with it, and I—Heaven help me!—I—I——"

"You refused?"

"No; I pledged myself to do as she asked."

He rose abruptly, walked to the chimney-piece, and gazed into the surface of the mirror, now dull again. His wife covered her face with her hands, trying to realize what he had said, to see him as he stood confessed, a man without a name, without trappings other than those he had taken from the lawful heir.

"Why did you break that pledge?"

Without looking round, he answered dully: "For the same reason that made you hide your absurd little secret from me—because I loved you, because I feared to lose you."

"I understand."

"I wonder whether you can? And you

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may be sure that the devil furnished me with other excellent reasons for holding my tongue. George has plenty of money. And I told myself that a promise extorted by the dying from the living is a pledge not binding. I would have promised anything to save her pain. Afterwards I comforted myself with the reflection that I was cherishing her good name. Everybody loved and honoured her; everybody knew that my reputed father had behaved like a brute to her.

"I always wondered," she said, softly, "how you could be his son."

She rose swiftly, clasping him in her arms, pulling his head down to hers, kissing his lips fervently.

"It makes no difference to my love for you."

"You sweet woman!"

Unmistakable joy animated his voice. He began to kiss her hair, her eyes, her cheeks in a passion of emotion. She returned his ardent caresses, clinging to him, whispering again and again that she was his eternally, and that he was hers till death and after death. When these first ardours had passed, she exclaimed, triumphantly:—

"You thought that your position counted with me; others thought so too."

"You are simply wonderful!"

"When will you tell George?"

He stood back from her, the light fading out of his eyes.

"Tell George? Do you *want* me to tel' George?"

"Is anything else possible?"

"That seems almost impossible. Am I not the better man?" He continued, quickly: "George will remain what he is to-day, a fox-hunting squire, addicted to the pleasures of the chase—and the table. I"—he drew himself up—"well, you know what I have done with another's birthright."

"It is another's birthright."

"Joan, I shouldered that responsibility when I married you. It is mine, not yours."

"Half of it is mine now."

"But the cost of renunciation to you!"

"Nothing counts with me in comparison with your honour."

"My honour? Isn't it rather late in the day to speak of that?"

"You told *me*, but you have no intention of telling George?"

"You insisted on sharing this secret."

She had thought that the battle was over; it had only just begun. She essayed a flight into the future, beating her wings against a gale, peering into the darkness, seeking some ark of refuge. She heard him saying, hoarsely:—

"You could never stand the exposure."

Desperately she clutched him.

"Never mind about my standing it. Could you stand it?"

He replied, evasively: "Not if it affected you—I am convinced of that."

The flash of this conviction seemed to illuminate new and strange vistas down which she wandered with him, a *nobleman*, noble only by virtue of appearance, really a nobody, in her eyes and his own contemptibly nameless.

"Arthur, I thought I saw you clearly just now, but you are blurred again. Are you thinking of yourself or of me?"

"I'm thinking of you."

"If it had not been for me you would have kept your promise to your mother?"

"Yes."

"Are you quite, quite sure of that?"

"I think so."

But she realized that he was not quite sure, a perception which gave her pause. He added, hesitatingly:—

"Legally, I *am* Lord Rochford."

"What do you mean by legally?"

"The law recognizes a child born in wedlock as legitimate. For instance, if the late Lord Rochford had declared that I was not his son, and brought the matter into court, the law would have sustained my legitimacy, unless his declaration had been fortified by overwhelming proofs. However, he believed me to be his son. Our position; you must understand, is unassailable."

"From without."

"I might plead that my mother was dying, so prostrated by suffering as to be hardly responsible."

"Arthur, you don't plead that, do you?"

"I don't. But I might—you might."

The temptation gripped her savagely, with a force that made her turn faint. Her own people had never suffered the pinch of poverty; on the other hand, they had never been rich. Ends were carefully adjusted to means.

"I suppose we should be very poor," she faltered.

"I inherit a few hundreds a year from my mother. Only yesterday George told me that he was glad he had escaped my responsibilities."

"I feel as if I was suffocating; and yet, and yet, I am thankful that you told me."

"The decision shall rest with you."

"Is that quite fair on me?"

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"I think so"—he spoke judicially—"because you have most to lose. The things you will have to surrender are dear to all women. I pledge myself to abide by your decision."

She flashed a hunted glance upon him, but he turned his head aside and sat down. The sparkle of her diamond ornaments arrested attention. She loved these pretty things, but nearly all of them were heirlooms. The colour flowed into her pale cheeks as she remembered that she might bear children. She tried to compute the effect of straitened means upon them. Then she looked at the mirror, and a curious whim seized her.

"Don't move," she said to her husband. "I want to consult that."

She switched off the lights and stood in front of the glass, waiting for a change that never came.

"Do you see anything?" he whispered.

"Nothing."

She knew that she would see nothing, if she waited till Doomsday. The mirror had revealed her own soul and his. The evil that may be comprehended in a lie had filled her with terror. The same effect was produced in him. She grasped what is perhaps the divinest of all truths, the real attribute of the soul, its faculty of reflecting and transmitting light. The mind might blunder and grope in obscurity; it might—how often it did!—be inspired with craven fear of the soul, unwilling to face its blinding radiance. Thus it had been with him and her. But henceforward she would know positively that happiness could not be achieved by the mind; it depended wholly upon the soul, upon the light, lacking which it must be extinguished; and then the baser weeds of the human heart would flourish monstrously in darkness and silence.

She wondered afterwards how much time had passed while she stood at the parting of the ways, looking down in horror, looking up in ecstasy, conscious in every fibre of her being that her soul's verdict had been delivered.

She walked swiftly to the door and switched on the light. Her husband stood up, staring at her face, as if it were the face of an angel. She pressed the electric bell communicating with George's room, and in the distance the vibrating tinkle was plainly heard.

"I have rung for George," she said, slowly. "You must tell him everything to-night."

"To-night?"

"I love *you*—the man, not the inheritor of a great name. I am glad that I can prove my love; glad that my love, which drove you to dishonour, can lift you out of it and above it. Redeem your pledge, if you love me truly, and I shall be the happiest wife in England. Bury your secret in my heart, and of all women I shall be the most miserable and forlorn."

As she finished speaking he caught her in his arms, and she saw him—unblurred.

"My God," he exclaimed, passionately, "how I'll work for you!"

"We'll work together."

George came hurrying in, his red face crimson with excitement, his slightly prominent blue eyes bulging out of his head.

"You rang?"

"Yes."

"Seen anything spooky?"

Arthur answered slowly: "I have seen what any man may see without looking into any mirror except his own soul. We shall sleep sound enough in that old bed, but not till I have told you something."

Then he told it.



"SEEN ANYTHING SPOOKY?"

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DREAMS:
The Latest Views of Science.

By WILLIAM BROWN, M.A., D.Sc.,
Head of the Psychological Department, King's College, University of London.

Illustrated by Vernon Anson.

THE meaning of dreams has exercised man's imagination throughout the ages, and may with some plausibility be regarded as the first question which the human mind set to itself in the earliest dawn of reason on our planet. Among the ancients the explanation most readily accepted was that dreams, in many if not in all cases, were revelations of a superior power, the voice of a god or demon, imparting to the dreamer knowledge of things future or far distant which he could not acquire by his own unaided faculties. However absurd a dream might superficially appear, interpretation according to the right "code" of symbolism was considered capable of giving it sense. In modern times, however, the theory that is on the whole most popular is one which denies all meaning to dreams, and regards them as merely the confused and jumbled reappearance during sleep of memories belonging to the person's past history, strung together in any chance order. At least, this is the theory adopted by many so-called scientists who do not happen to have studied this particular problem scientifically.

These two views are the extremes between which the manifold opinions held by modern thinkers will be found to oscillate. Somewhere between them, no doubt, the truth must lie. It is quite possible that no one explanation will suffice for all cases, but that different types of dreams require different theories to explain them. In any case, one is now able to limit the possibilities within fixed bounds, thanks to the careful scientific research that has been done in connection with the subject during quite recent years. Not only have trained scientists observed and recorded their dreams with great accuracy over long stretches of time; they have also studied dreams experimentally, by deliberately interfering with a person's sleep in certain ways and noting the effect on his dreams. The object of the present article is to state the more important of these scientifically-ascertained facts in simple language, to describe several important theories that have been suggested in recent years, giving actual dreams as examples, and to indicate what seems to be the most probable explanation of dreams in the light of our present knowledge. Since the explanation of dreams given quite recently by Professor Sigmund Freud, of Vienna, is exceptionally original, as well as being highly ingenious and interesting, much space will be devoted to the description and explanation of this theory. Even if it is not the entire truth about dreams, there is little doubt that it contains a great part of the truth.

Almost all scientific observers agree that the materials of which dreams are made are memories of past experiences of the individual. Curiously enough, the memories that occur most frequently are those of the previous day and those of early childhood. The former class are to be found in every dream, and are probably an essential condition to its formation; the latter (recollections of childhood) seem to be of even greater importance, since they contribute much of the hidden meaning of the dream. In many cases where the incidents of a dream seem to be entirely unfamiliar it has been shown by careful investigation that they correspond to actually experienced events that have escaped the memory of the waking self. Delbœuf records an interesting example of this. In 1862 he dreamt that he found two lizards in the snow. He took them up, warmed them, and placed them in a hole in a wall, together with a small fern, which he knew they liked to eat. The name of this fern seemed in his dream to be *Asplenium ruta muralis*. Later on in his dream he saw two other lizards come and eat the remains of the fern, and then a whole host of lizards coming to the wall in a long procession which covered the entire street. On awaking he could not remember ever to have heard the name of the fern of his dream, although he discovered that a fern called

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"A WHOLE HOST OF LIZARDS COMING TO THE WALL IN A LONG PROCESSION WHICH COVERED THE ENTIRE STREET."

Asplenium ruta muraria really existed. Sixteen years later, however, he happened to be turning over the pages of a friend's album of dried flowers, and to his surprise came across the very fern, with the Latin name written underneath *in his own handwriting*. He then remembered that in 1860, two years before the dream, he had met the sister of this friend, and to please her had written the Latin names under the various plants in her album at the dictation of a botanist. Fifteen years after the dream he also discovered the source of the lizard procession in an old illustrated paper, dated 1861, which, as a regular subscriber, he must have seen. Innumerable cases of a similar nature are on record, and go to show how remarkably heightened the memory may be in dreams. They also warn us not too rashly to believe that incidents in a dream which seem entirely new are really so.

Another characteristic of the memory in dreams is that it chooses incidents that in the waking life are the most unimportant and trivial, and passes over events that have absorbed the dreamer's attention during the day. This is especially the case with regard to the parts of the dream originating in the events of the previous day. Indeed, upon this fact has been built the theory that dreaming is to be explained as the method which the mind employs for eliminating or "excreting" the unimportant incidents of the day, which if left in the mind would disturb its normal functions.

A very remarkable feature of dreams is the apparent speed with which they occur. A fraction of a second may suffice for quite a long and complicated dream. The classical instance of this is a dream recorded by Maury. Maury dreamt that he was living in Paris at the time of the French Revolution; that, after many adventures, he was eventually arrested and brought before a tribunal consisting of Robespierre, Marat, Fouquier-Tinville, and the rest, was cross-questioned, and eventually condemned to death. Accompanied by an innumerable crowd of people, he proceeds to the scaffold, the executioner binds him to the plank, the knife falls, he feels his head severed from his body, and—wakes up terror-stricken, to find that the curtain-pole of his bed has fallen across his neck. If the facts are correct, it would seem that this complicated dream took place between the moment that the curtain-pole fell and the moment the dreamer awoke. But another explanation of this and similar dreams is possible, as we shall presently see.

It is interesting to note how appropriately

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"THE CURTAIN-POLE OF HIS BED HAD FALLEN ACROSS HIS NECK."

the dream adapts itself to the nature of the waking stimulus, and yet how divergent the dreams may be which on different occasions end with the same waking stimulus. Hildebrandt gives three striking examples of dreams brought to an end (or aroused?) by an alarum-clock. In the first the dreamer is sauntering through the fields on a beautiful spring morning, meets people walking in their best clothes, prayer-book in hand, and remembers that it is Easter Day. Eventually reaching a village church, he rests in the churchyard to cool himself, and hears the bell-ringer slowly mount the rickety stairs of the steeple. After an appreciable pause the bell begins to move and sends out a clear note, which quickly changes to a harsh clamour, and he awakes to hear the alarum-clock. In another dream it is the depths of winter, snow lies deep on the ground, he prepares for a sleigh-ride. The sleigh is at the door. He dons fur coat and cap, mounts, and, after a few moments' delay, during which the horses paw the ground with impatience, shakes the reins. The horses bound forward, the sleigh-bells tinkle—then the note changes, and he awakes to the sound of the alarum-clock. In a third dream he sees a maid-servant carrying a tall pile of plates from the kitchen, and calls out: "Be careful; they will fall!" The maid ignores his warning, stumbles on the threshold, he sees the column sway in the air and then fall with a crash, and he awakes—again to hear the alarum-clock.

One is tempted to conclude from these instances that the dreams were *produced* by the waking stimulus, and were so many unsuccessful attempts of the drowsy consciousness to perceive and interpret the nature of this intruding stimulus. In fact,

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Maury, Weygandt, and others have experimentally produced dreams in this way. Maury got someone to tickle him on the lips and nose with a feather while asleep. He dreamed of a frightful torture, in which a plaster mask was laid on his face and then torn away, dragging the skin with it. On another occasion water was dropped upon his forehead. He dreamt that he was in Italy and perspiring profusely from the heat; also that he was drinking the white wine of Orvieto.

These experiments are certainly sufficient to show how important the waking stimulus is in the production of dreams, but it needs little reflection upon them to see that the state of the person's mind and brain at the moment is of at least equal importance. In every case the real explanation of the dream, if an explanation is demanded at all, must be looked for in the latter of these two factors. Professor Freud's theory of dreams does explain them in this way, and, consequently, is far more satisfactory than most other theories. But before describing this theory I must just mention another which, as it were, paves the way to Freud's view. This is the theory of Scherner. Scherner held that dreams were due to organic sensations—*i.e.*, sensations aroused by changes in the internal organs, such as the stomach, liver, heart, etc. These sensations are, of course, present during waking life, but in sleep, owing to the suppression of sensations of sight, hearing, etc., they become very much more prominent. The mind then reacts to them "symbolically," translating them into sensations of sight and touch which may correspond to their shape or represent them in some other plausible and metaphorical way. Thus, in a headache during sleep the head may be represented by a room with spiders crawling over the ceiling. The sensations from the lungs, when pronounced, may be symbolized in the dream-consciousness by the roaring of a stove filled with flames. Persons suffering from heart-trouble may dream of driving sweating horses up a steep hill. Disturbances of inner sensations seem in this way not only to be symbolically transformed, but also to undergo a kind of psychical magnification. Dreams may thus in many cases act like a mental microscope, and reveal the earliest beginnings of mental or physical disease which might otherwise escape the physician's notice. Aristotle was the first thinker to recognize this fact, and he emphasized its importance as an aid in the diagnosis of commencing disease.



"HE SEES THE PLATES FALL WITH A CRASH."

Freud's theory, put quite briefly, is that every dream represents the fulfilment of some *wish*. This wish-fulfilment in most cases occurs in a disguised form, and only becomes apparent after interpretation of the dream according to his method of "psycho-analysis." Freud draws an important distinction between what he calls the "manifest content" and the "latent content" of a dream. The "manifest content" is the dream as it appears for ordinary observation, and shows all the characteristics which we have enumerated earlier in this article. That is,

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"PERSONS SUFFERING FROM HEART-TROUBLE MAY DREAM OF DRIVING SWEATING HORSES UP A STEEP HILL."

it is shadowy, confused, seemingly unintelligible, and is made up of elements that come from (in many cases) long-forgotten incidents of the dreamer's past life. The different parts of the dream are joined together in an apparently arbitrary manner. The "latent content" is the hidden meaning of the dream, and in every case represents the fulfilment of some wish. The wish often originates from the earliest years of one's life and disguises itself in the fragmentary memories of the previous day, although many wishes of one's recent life may also be represented in dreams. Often it is only upon analysis and interpretation of a dream that one becomes aware of the very existence of the wish. The wish exists in what is called the subconscious or unconscious part of the person's mental life, and may only come to the surface of the mind in this disguised form of a dream. Why should the wish be hidden or disguised in this way? Because, says Freud, it is not in harmony with the ethical or conventional ideals of the waking life. Many wishes of early childhood are evidently of this nature, and therefore they have been "suppressed" (but not annihilated) by the censor of the waking and conventional self. Even during sleep this censor still keeps watch over the mind, though not with the same alertness as in the daytime. The forbidden wishes, which in waking life are kept out of consciousness altogether, find that they can evade the vigilance of the censor during sleep by disguising themselves —*i.e.*, by assuming a symbolic dress patched up out of the neglected memories of the dreamer's recent experiences—and can so slip past into the half-light of dream consciousness. In order to overcome this resistance of the censor, it may be necessary for the wish to undergo great distortion. Feelings may be changed into their opposites, hostility represented by apparent friendship and tenderness, pleasure by pain and anxiety; unimportant details may be over-emphasized and the essential parts of the dream left in shade and obscurity. As the dreamer rouses and eventually wakes, the censor gains greater power and perspicacity, and does its best to

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wipe out the traces of the dream altogether. This is Freud's explanation of the remarkable rapidity with which most dreams are forgotten after waking.

The wish may be of a quite innocuous nature, and yet appear in the dream in a disguised form. It is reported that Alexander the Great, when besieging Tyre (which was making such a stubborn resistance that he despaired of taking it), dreamt one night that he saw a satyr dancing on his shield. An astrologer, Aristandros, who happened to be in his train, interpreted this dream as meaning that he would take Tyre, since "*saturos*," the Greek for satyr, could be split up into "*sa Turos*," which equals "Tyre is thine." Encouraged by the dream, Alexander pressed the siege with great vigour, and quickly took the town. This example is a very neat illustration of Freud's theory, and also shows the play upon words which is so frequent a way in which wish-fulfilments are symbolized. Freud has himself remarked upon the fact that most of our "dream-books," which are still popular among the ignorant at the present day, are translations from Eastern writings, where the interpretation of dreams was mainly a matter of verbal similarity. Of course, these verbal similarities and analogies lose their force when translated into another tongue, and so become merely misleading.

Freud would explain Maury's dream of the guillotine, described earlier in this article, as being an entire memory, or rather imagination, originating from early life, when the stirring history of the French Revolution produced a wish to have lived in those times, which is aroused *en bloc* by the fall of the curtain-pole. The hidden wish seized the opportunity afforded by this guillotine-like stimulus to realize itself as an actual incident of Maury's life. That the wish culminated in a tragedy does not necessarily make the explanation a far-fetched one.

The wish to continue sleeping is the cause of many dreams. A medical student, who was very fond of his bed, was one morning called by his landlady: "Mr. Pepi, get up; you must go to the hospital!" Thereupon the sleeper proceeded to dream of a ward in the hospital, where he lay on a bed, with a card over his head containing the legend: "Pepi, H., medical student, twenty-two years." He said to himself in his dream: "Since I am already in the hospital, I don't need to go there," turned over, and continued his sleep.

A similar explanation will partly account for the following dream. A father has lost his dearly-loved child. The open coffin is in a room adjoining the father's bedroom, lighted candles are placed near it, and an old man watches during the night while the father snatches a few hours' much-needed sleep. The latter dreams that his little son stands at his side and cries reproachfully: "Don't you see, father, that I am burning?" Waking up, he sees through the half-open door the old man asleep and one of the candles fallen and burning the arm of his boy. We may suppose that the light of the conflagration, striking on the father's half-closed eyes, served as the stimulus to produce a dream realizing his heartrending wish to see his child alive once more. Combined with this desire is the wish to continue dreaming, that he may still enjoy its bitter sweetness. That the child in the dream complains of burning shows that the father correctly inferred in his sleep that the light seen was due to burning of the winding-sheet. Instead of awaking immediately, the dream comes as a fulfilment of the two wishes just mentioned.

Dreams, like the poor, are always with us, and it should not be difficult for my readers to test the truth of Freud's theory from their own manifold experiences. They will find that the method of psycho-analysis, when applied to their dreams, throws light upon springs of action in their character which would otherwise have remained hidden in obscurity.

Of the dreams not to be explained by this theory, some would seem to be entirely meaningless, an obscure jumble of memories, often unpleasant, aroused by disturbances of digestion, etc.; others, such as those of falling from a height, going into water, etc., are derived from experiences of earliest childhood; and, finally, some are not to be explained without the assumption of telepathic communication between the mind of the dreamer and some other outside mind. Examples of the last are to be found in great numbers in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, and several good ones in F. W. H. Myers's well-known book; and, in my own view at least, many, if not all of them, make the view of telepathic communication between minds during sleep unavoidable. Whether dreams ever make it possible for one to look into the future is too difficult a question to consider here.

So far as the future is contained in the past, such prophetic dreams are, of course, conceivable, even on the lines of the strictest materialism. To speculate farther would be to step beyond the bounds of science.

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RAGAN IN RUINS.

The Experience of a Millionaire in Search of Sincerity.

By BERTRAM ATKEY.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

"CIGAR, please, Belton."

Ragan bent over the box his man brought him.

"The last of the dandies, eh, Belton?" he said, looking up at the valet. "Let's hope it's a case of the survival—until now—of the fittest." His lips twitched as he noted the uncomfortable look on Belton's impassive face.

"You instructed me to order no more, sir," said the man, a faint protest in his voice.

"Yes." Ragan nodded, pensively surveying the solitary Havana that remained in the box. "Belton, the loneliest, most stranded, down-and-out-looking thing in the whole world is the last cigar of the box. Make a note of that for your book."

"My book, sir?" Belton looked puzzled.

"Yes. Aren't you writing a book?"

"Book, sir? Certainly not, sir," remonstrated the valet, apparently shocked.

"Oh, I thought perhaps you were. You ought to—I could provide you with some material."

Ragan looked again at the cigar and shook his head. "I won't smoke it—that poor little, lonely survivor, Belton. I'll have a cigarette. So you are not writing a book? Do you do any journalism?"

"Journalism, sir? No, never, sir"—very emphatically, as though resenting the accusation.

"Ah, that's a pity. How about the market? Ever do anything with stock—shares, you know?"

Belton shook his head, a puzzled look in his eyes. "No, sir—of course not, sir."

Ragan sighed.

"Well, you are going to lose an opportunity of making a haul to-day."

Belton looked sorry. He was not the only man in the world, by some thousands, who believed what Ragan said when Ragan spoke about money.

"The fact is, Belton," said Ragan, slowly, as though relishing every word—"the fact is, I'm ruined."

Belton deftly concealed a sudden smile.

"Indeed, sir!" he said, politely, manifestly believing that his master was joking. Ragan looked at him curiously.

"You don't believe it, Belton?" he asked.

The valet hesitated for a second only.

"Well, sir," he said, "it *does* seem a little bit far-fetched, sir." His smile refused to be concealed—it became almost a grin. The idea of Ragan being ruined was really amusing. Ragan, the multi-millionaire, the Petrol Potentate! No wonder Belton grinned.

"Far-fetched, hey?" said Ragan, a new, grim reflection in his voice. "You'll see. If I pay twenty shillings in the pound when my affairs are straightened out, Belton, there are men in the City of London—yes, and New York and Paris and Berlin, too—who will weep tears of joy!"

Belton's face changed suddenly. He knew when Ragan was serious. He turned very white and sat down suddenly.

"Beg pardon, Mr. Charles," he apologized. "My knees went queer—seemed to give out, kind of. This is a great shock to me, sir." The man was literally trembling. "I—I can't quite imagine it. Ruined! What are you going to do about it, sir?"

"Do about it, Belton? Oh, I've got thousands of friends—thousands. I'm going to rely on them to lend me a hand, to start me afresh. One isn't too old at thirty-five. It will be all right."

Uneasiness settled on the valet's face.

"Yes, sir," he said. But it was a question rather than a concurrence.

"Don't you think so, Belton? Don't you think my friends—lots of 'em are men I *made*—dragged 'em out of naked poverty, Belton—you don't mean that you think they won't help me, do you?"

Belton was silent, his eyes on the white cloth on the breakfast-table. Ragan was smiling—rather tensely.

"You don't think they'll help, eh, Belton? What's the matter with you? Say what you think."

"Very good, sir." The valet raised his

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head suddenly, and looked his master squarely in the eyes. "You ask me a plain question and give me leave to give a plain answer, sir. Well, then, I don't believe that out of the hundreds of money-grabbing time-servers and spongers and lying flatterers that have lived on you for years you'll find six real friends now that you need 'em. That's my opinion, sir. And, Mr. Charles, I know what I'm talking about."

Ragan's face was very serious.

"I say, Belton, aren't you exaggerating a bit? There are plenty of people who have come to this flat and cried—cried like children—about money, and have begged for a chance to do something to show their gratitude when I've helped them. Why, man, you've seen a lot of it for yourself. You've grown cynical, that's what's wrong."

Belton stood up.

"Very good, Mr. Charles," he said. "I hope you're right." He began mechanically to clear up the breakfast-table, then stopped suddenly.

"Mr. Charles," he said, flushing, "if things have gone kind of rocky in the City, I know you well enough to know that you'll soon master 'em again, without much help from any friends. If—what I mean to say—well, sir—it sounds ridiculous—I've——" He stopped.

Ragan looked at him almost hungrily.

"Come on, Belton," he said. "Out with it."

"Well, sir, I've managed to put by a few hundred quid—pounds, sir. About seven hundred. If you'd like to take that as a loan, sir, I would be proud. I—I—believe in you, sir," stammered the man. It was the first time Ragan had ever seen Belton perturbed. "I know what you can do, sir—and I've had a good deal from you above my wages."

Ragan smiled. There was relief in his eyes—relief and something very friendly. He held out his hand.

"Shake hands, Belton," he said. "I've got one friend, anyhow. Leave that money where it is for a time, though. There are a lot of people in this town who owe me more than you do. I'll give them a chance first. But you're a white man, and I'm hoping to find some more of the same colour. Are the newspapers here?"

Belton brought them in, and Ragan opened one—a morning paper with a mighty circulation.

"Ah! *They* are on to it!" he snapped, sharply, and pointed to a flaring headline.

FAILURE
OF
MR. CHARLES RAGAN,
THE PETROL PRINCE.
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER'S
EUROPEAN RIVAL
IN LIQUIDATION.

Belton craned over his shoulder, staring with horrified eyes at the announcement.

Then an electric bell somewhere outside the room purred long and insistently.

Ragan put down the paper.

"That's the first of the crowd who'll want me to settle out of hand, Belton. You'll get scores to-day. Stave 'em off—stave 'em off! Refer them to Mr. Griffiths, my solicitor," he said, a remote excitement in his voice.

Belton's face hardened as he went out.

Left alone, Ragan laughed softly.

"*Now* we shall see—just what sort of friends I've got," he murmured. A momentary cloud shadowed his keen, clean-shaven, good-looking face.

"If Belton's right——" he said, then shrugged. "Impossible," he added. "Why, he gave himself away." He smiled as he thought of Belton's savings—but there was no mockery in the smile. He felt very friendly towards the valet, who had taken the news so hard.

And that was good for Belton—better than Belton dreamed.

For Ragan stood there worth a clear two and a half millions if he was worth a penny—and never a soul in the world but Ragan and one lawyer knew it.

It had been the work of a year—delicate, tortuous, very skilful manipulation—this quiet "getting out" with two and a half millions. And the cost had been vast. There is no more sensitive organization in the world than the money market, and, at his zenith, no financier was more carefully watched than Charles Ragan. But for all that he had successfully effected the withdrawal from the money whirlpool of the huge, cumbrous amount and its quiet investment in steady national—of many nations—securities, without the knowledge of his financial foes and allies, and, cleverer still, without seriously harming anyone's interests. This done, there remained a long labour of bringing himself to the verge of ruin—in the public eye—so that he could fall alone, leaving safe all his associates, from the noble chairmen of the companies he had built up and dominated to the office-boys thereof.

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And now that, too, was done. And nobody but his lawyer and himself knew the colossal ingenuity the doing had involved.

That he had been successful the headlines of the morning newspapers screamed at him.

He stood there, staring absently at the heavy type, wondering if he had been wise. The sound of Belton at issue with many callers fell upon his ears, and he smiled doubtfully. He wondered at the sudden loss of confidence. He had not felt like this when



"'AH! THEY ARE ON TO IT,' HE SNAPPED, SHARPLY, AND POINTED TO A FLARING HEADLINE."

the idea had first come to him a year ago. Then it had seemed to him that there was no doubt at all that many people were his friends because they liked him, and not merely because the cords of simple, unselfish friendship were, in so many cases, supplemented—or should be—by the chains of gratitude.

He had said so to Griffiths, his lawyer, and Griffiths had laughed and dryly told him that no man but a bankrupt was really qualified to be a judge of gratitude.

He had thought that over. One man, even, he had asked—a man whom he had just lifted out of the slough of ruin and put in train to fight his way to prosperity. "You say you are grateful. What would you do if I went right to the other end—smashed—and came to you for help?"

Folding his cheque, the man had said:—

"You would see, Mr. Ragan," and his voice had trembled. "I'm not one of the

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talkers—but you would see. All I had would be yours, at least."

And the man had believed he was speaking the truth.

This was to be Ragan's holiday and voyage of discovery. He had had enough of money-making, anyway—he wanted to retire—and so he had arranged it. He intended to retire, not as a raider retiring full-flushed with spoil from some stronghold of Mammon, but as a failure—a seeker for help, a searcher for material gratitude.

Griffiths, when the plan was explained, had said: "All you will discover is that the world is governed by self-interest. Don't do it, Ragan. You stand to lose more than you can gain. You think you have hosts of friends. Keep on thinking it. But, for Heaven's sake, don't test them."

Well—now Ragan would see for himself.

First, however, he must call at the Lee-Knightons. There, at any rate, he was sure of his reception. It would put him in good heart for the disappointments that—according to Griffiths and Belton—awaited him. Sir John—another who owed all his present prosperity to Ragan—he knew, would help him. Lady Lee-Knighton's liking for him, he believed, was proof against adversity, and Clare—was Clare? The only reason Clare and he were not yet formally betrothed, it was tacitly understood, was because she was a month or so too young. In two months she would be nineteen, when, her mother had encouraged Ragan to believe, everything could be formally arranged. Yes, Ragan was sure of his friends in that house.

So he went there—not in his big limousine, nor his electric runabout, nor his silver-grey Rolls-Royce touring-car, for all these were now held up by the liquidators, acting for yesterday's first flurried meeting of creditors. He went on foot.

At the end of the street he came face to face with Fitzlough—Major Fitzlough.

The Major was hurrying but at sight of Ragan he stopped abruptly, his fat, red face becoming radiant and a curious glitter flashing into his pale, quick, rather cruel-looking eyes.

"Charles Ragan on foot!" he said, playfully, in his metallic voice. "The man of many motors! Wonderful!" He laughed a jolly laugh. "I was hurrying to catch you before you went to the City, Charlie, my boy."

The Major was one of those bluff, breezy, "old uncle" men who "my boy'd" everybody. An adventurer, if ever there was one, whose happy hunting-ground was the fringe of good society. A bear—or rather cub—leader, a tuft-hunter. "I like a lord, and I'm not ashamed of it, my boy—why should I be, hey?" An extraordinarily fine bridge-player, equally good at billiards, *habitué* of all the best paddocks and grand stands, he knew more than a little of the City. But, apparently, he had not read his paper yet that morning.

He shook hands.

"Charles, my boy, I need two ponies for two days precisely," he began—as he had often begun before, but Ragan interrupted him. A newsboy came racing past, hoarsely hawking the early sporting edition of an "evening" paper, and Ragan beckoned him. The Major watched.

Ragan bought and opened a paper and directed Fitzlough's attention to a column dealing with himself.

The breezy old soldier gasped, turned purple, and then the colour faded, leaving his cheeks unwholesomely mottled.

"Great Scot, Ragan!" he said. He owed Ragan between two and three hundred pounds—loans snatched deftly at the right instant. All the bluff heartiness was gone—the man's eyes had hardened and the remotely predatory gleam in them had died out. They reflected nothing but the spirit of defence, of wariness, now. The Major was on guard—this looked as though he might be called upon to refund those airy loans!

"What does this mean, Ragan?" he asked.

Ragan shrugged his shoulders.

"Smash," he said, curtly, reading the man like print.

Major Fitzlough gave him back the paper.

"I'm sorry—upset. This is a great shock. I'm upset—it is terrible!"

He fixed his glossy silk hat more firmly on his head, glancing round sharply. He was not sure that it was going to do him any good to be seen chatting with this ruined stock-gambler.

"I sympathize deeply—deeply, Ragan. Is it irretrievable?"

"Quite." Ragan's skin crawled with contempt.

The Major made as though to move on.

"Terrible—terrible!" he said, and took a step forward. "See you at the club later."

Ragan let him go without answering. He knew that the man was thanking his gods that he had never given any written acknowledgment of those loans, which he would never repay—had never intended to repay.

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Ragan shrugged and resumed his walk. He had known what the Major was long enough ago; he had never expected the money back. The man was little more than a jackal with a careful air of bluff breeziness. London is stiff with them.

Ragan had not even paid him the compliment of marking him off as one of those whom he should "test." He had merely pitied him before; now he just despised him.

"What can you expect from a wolf but a bite?" said Ragan, gaily, and continued his way to the Lee-Knightons.

A motor-car was standing outside the house when he arrived—a long, low, yellow car, which he recognized at once. It belonged to young Hugo Wallhurst, son of Wallhurst, the coal baron.

Something stirred slowly in his heart as he recognized the car. Nine o'clock in the morning is a very unusual hour at which to call upon anyone. But Ragan had a reason for calling. What reason had young Wallhurst? He knew that the boy was a worshipper of Clare Lee-Knighton.

Then he laughed again. It was too fanciful to imagine that Wallhurst had called for any reason connected with him. And yet he was too quick to fail to see that if Wallhurst were desperate for Clare, and if the newspapers were right, now was his chance, if ever.

But it was a slender chance, for it was Ragan's intention to explain to the Lee-Knightons his real position and his scheme of "exploration" for the next few months. That was why he was calling so early—to allay the effect of the newspapers. It was due to them, at least. He had decided that on the previous evening. With a certain uneasiness it had occurred to him that perhaps it would have been in better taste to have taken them into his confidence before.

That the news had spread throughout the house he saw in the first glance at the man who opened the door in response to his ring.

But he had little opportunity of observing the manservant, for as the door closed Lady Lee-Knighton came into the hall.

She started at sight of Ragan, and it seemed to him her rather florid face paled a little. For a fraction of time—so minute as to be barely perceptible—she hesitated. Then she came to him smiling. But her eyes were strange. They were cold and hard and wary. So changed were they from the ordinary that it seemed to Ragan almost as though she were some other woman—a stranger.

Then she shook hands, and began to talk swiftly.

"Good morning," she said. "You are our second early caller. Mr. Wallhurst came a little while ago. There must be something in the air this morning; no one wants to go to the City. Sir John refused point-blank to go; it was too fine for work. We are going motoring. I haven't even had energy enough to look at the papers this morning. It is too hot to read, or even pretend to."

Ragan was turning cold. The insincerity of the woman was too obvious. It was blatant—in her fixed smile, her cold eyes, her high, hurried voice, the abrupt, nervous movements of her hands. She hastened on.

"Besides, we have had something more to think about, Mr. Ragan." She nodded with a horrible archness. "A surprise. Clare and Hugo Wallhurst. It seems that they have—had an understanding—between themselves—for months past. Clare hinted at something of the kind last night, and this morning Hugo called and they came to us together. It was pretty; not, perhaps, quite what her father and I had planned for Clare. But what were we to do? They adore each other. So—it is arranged."

She stopped with almost a gasp of relief; she had got it out before Ragan explained. There was fear in her eyes—both fear and relief. She stared at Ragan, palpitating.

Very calm, diamond hard, Ragan spoke.

"Ah, I see," he said. "You have not yet looked at this morning's papers, Lady Lee-Knighton?"

"No." Her hands trembled faintly. "Why do you ask?"

Ragan smiled. He knew she lied, and he guessed at the frenzied secret haste with which she must have made her plans for Clare and Wallhurst before he (Ragan) arrived. Something in his heart was icy-cold, but he remained self-possessed.

"This is the art of—diplomacy, is it not?" he said.

The bitter contempt in his eyes stung her suddenly. She could have screamed at him. But she controlled herself, and, tensely low-voiced, gave him the truth.

"It is," she said. "Will you combat it?"

She glanced round. No one was within hearing, and quite suddenly she gave herself up to the luxury of anger and the vicious frankness of anger.

"It *is*," she repeated. "You have been a millionaire so long that you have become arrogant, contemptuous of appearances. But we are not. The world is looking on always, and only millionaires can afford to forget it—millionaires and paupers. Since you insist,

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"THERE WAS FEAR IN HER EYES—BOTH FEAR AND RELIEF."

I will tell you that I did see the papers very early this morning, and I saw that you were ruined. Well, was I to throw my daughter into the morass with you? You expect a great deal too much if you expect that. What reason was there? Perhaps you think that because you helped my husband when he needed help you are entitled to claim Clare. You are wrong, Mr. Ragan. Financial matters are for the City. See my husband there, and adjust your claims on his gratitude there. Clare's future is in my province. I will deal with it according to my own judgment. You affect contempt because I try to arrange that people should understand Clare and Hugo were affianced before we knew of your failure, but I do not agree that it is contemptible. And you will find few people who will." She half turned away.

"And Clare? Is she content?" inquired Ragan.

"Perfectly. Clare is very sensible."

"Then — being —er— ruined, and therefore ineligible — I am dismissed?" demanded Ragan, very quietly.

A stare of hatred and disdain was his only reply for a moment. Then:—

"You are unreasonable and unjust," she said. "I will not discuss it."

"You do not deny that solely by my help your husband has climbed from the verge of ruin to comparative wealth?" he asked. "Why do you hate me so?"

She shook her head, like one suddenly spent.

"I will tell you. You hate me now because you are treating me badly."

"If it affords you any satisfaction to think that, do so," she said, and left him. Ragan stared round, a little dazed, for a second.

"Why, I thought she liked me—she and Sir John—and that Clare loved me!" he said, weakly. He recovered himself immediately

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and the butler let him out. He walked back slowly to his flat, thinking desperately.

He saw now, with extraordinary clearness, that either he was completely out of touch with the ordinary, everyday outlook of the world, or that the Lee-Knightons were unusually worthless people. Why, they had acted as he had read of people acting with a leper—they fled at sight.

He was still thinking vaguely when he arrived at his flat.

On the stairs Griffiths, the lawyer, pale and worried, was standing. He was a young man and faithful to Ragan.

They went in together.

"What is it?" asked Ragan.

The eyes of the other man looked keenly at the millionaire.

"Why, they've started on you already!" he said, rather shrilly. "Heavens! isn't there any decency left in the world?" He recovered himself, sat down close to Ragan, and began to speak very earnestly.

"I hope they have hit you hard," he said, and his tone was bitter. "Hard enough for you to see the folly of this thing—and to stop it. Man, you must. They've been at me, too—vultures! Ragan, I've heard men—small men, little men—say things this morning that would make you ill. For the sake of the money—quite small sums, some of them—you owe them. You don't know—can't guess. Some of them are like wolves—fighting, almost, over priority of claims. Afraid, too. I've seen things before—queer, shady things—but I've never seen such absolute frank greediness—inconsideration—in my life as some 'friends' of yours have shown this morning. You see, they all thought you were as safe as the Bank of England. They relied on your accounts—and the idea of any chance of losing them simply scares them cold—sets them on edge. They were too nervous to believe me when I told 'em you'd pay twenty shillings in the pound." He paused a moment. Then he continued, flatly: "Ragan, you'll have to give up your idea. It stirs things up too much—horrible things. The world is—what we've made it. Call it a pool with clear water on top, and the poisonous bad things sunk to the bottom. Agitate the pool, and all those bad things come to the top. See what I mean? The driving force is Self-Interest—all the rest is the nickel and the shiny part of the life machine. It's all right—good enough for people who haven't been intelligent enough to *build* a better machine—all right as long as you don't touch the source of the power—the driving force. That disturbs the machine. Heavens, what a world we've made of it!" The phrase seemed wrung out of him. He pointed to Ragan with a shaking forefinger.

"And you—what do you stand to get out of it all? Let me tell you. A broken heart, a shattered faith, a soured outlook. You want to go out to discover sincerity, gratitude. But you will only discover greed!" He shook his head nervously as Ragan opened his lips.

"I know—I know; there are cases here and there—here and there—of sincere kindness, sympathy, little friendly things—lots of them, if you like; but you won't find them in the places where you propose to look. Man, in one hour this morning I've heard a dozen men who I thought were your friends talk as though they hated you, for fear of their little money; and many of them have practically lived on you—your business—for years. You must let the thing go—end it. You have all you can expect, even one or two real friends. The rest are nothing—acquaintances—friends until you test them."

Ragan thought for a long time, very still, very white.

"I believe you've had enough of it already," said Griffiths.

"Enough? Enough?" Ragan rose suddenly, his face hard and twisted. "They've broken me already. Enough?"

A light of understanding rose in the solicitor's eyes.

"You don't mean the Lee-Knightons—already?" he said.

Ragan nodded.

"Certainly the parents, but I can't believe yet that Clare would——"

He hesitated. Before he could finish the door opened and a girl came in.

"Miss Lee-Knighton," announced Belton, tensely.

She came straight to Ragan, arms out, eyes wide, unfaltering. Never had he seen her so beautiful, nor loved her more.

"They told me a thousand things—terrible," she said. "Mother sent for Hugo Wallhurst. I tried to do what they said, but I couldn't—I couldn't! How could I——"

Ragan took her, hungrily, his eyes victorious. She was crying, and clung to him like a child, a little tired child.

Petting her, Ragan understood. They had done all they could to dissuade her—the pitiless-eyed mother, the suave and skilful father, the elders. And they had failed to keep her. She had won to him—just. For she was young, and she loved him; and so

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"SHE CAME STRAIGHT TO RAGAN, ARMS OUT, EYES WIDE, UNFALTERING."

she had conquered the world—the world as her parents focused it for her.

Ragan's problem was solved.

It was *youth*—fearless, careless, unconstrained—that kept the world sweet; youth and love, the key of youth. He had wondered what was wrong with the world. Now he knew. Nothing was wrong except that men and women grow old—old and hard and bitter.

Over the bowed head of the girl Ragan nodded to Griffiths.

"End it," he said.

Griffiths smiled and went. The great experiment was over before it had well begun.

Ragan lifted the girl's face.

"Listen, dear," he said. "You have done nothing wrong. You have done everything right for you and for me, and nothing wrong for your people."

And he told her of the millions he had kept, and they went together to tell the mother and the father, who, at middle age, nevertheless were grown so old, so old, that they thought the millions were all that mattered.

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The Nature and Nurture of Beauty.

Do Pretty Children Grow Up Good-Looking? How Mothers Can Influence Their Children's Looks.

By Dr. C. W. SALEEBY.

"THE saying that beauty is only skin-deep," said Herbert Spencer, "is only a skin-deep saying"; and since the fact is that beauty goes as deep as the mind (however deep that may be), it is worth our while to study its nature and nurture. First of all a few words as to what we cannot help, and then much more as to what we can.

Beauty has foundations in "nature," or heredity, which are beyond our control in any given child. What we commonly call the "upper classes" in this country are certainly the better-looking classes, and, though this partly depends upon the nurture of their beauty, it largely depends upon the fact that men of position and wealth have for generations been able to choose beauty in their brides, and have assuredly done so. Hence the type of beauty which we see at Lord's when the 'Varsities or Eton and Harrow are playing each other. It is largely the product of what we may call æsthetic selection, and its results are inimitable by any other process. As a Eugenist I am interested to imagine what sort of an aristocracy we might have if ever men found brains as attractive as beauty, which notoriously "draws us by a single hair"; but that will probably not be until "Doomsday in the afternoon," and we need not speculate about it here, especially since there are more valuable things than even brains.

Now, everything that is *natural* does not appear at birth—for instance, a man's beard, which he inherits, but which takes many years to appear. We change from year to year as we are predestined to, and the question arises, Do beautiful children become beautiful adults? Or is there no particular connection between beauty in childhood and in adult life? Undoubtedly there is a connection, but it needs very careful statement unless we are to go wrong. The beautiful child is more likely than the plain one to be beautiful in adult life, but there are many conditions to note on both sides. Illustrations of beauty which was unmistakable in childhood and in later life can be seen on the pages of this article, but "there are others" which would tell another tale.

Firstly, let no parent despair of a plain child. Beauty, so far from being "skin-deep," largely depends upon the proportion between the different parts of the face, and this depends upon their rate of growth. Before a boy's voice breaks he may have a very defective chin, a serious blemish for our ideal of manly beauty. But that chin may be destined to grow, just when the boy's beard begins to grow, and may transform him. I saw the other day an old school-fellow whom I could scarcely recognize, so vastly improved was he, since his young boyhood, by the acquisition of that chin which anatomists tell us is a peculiarity (and therefore a beauty!) of our species. Robert Southey was described by his nurse as a "great ugly boy" when he was born, but he grew to be so handsome that Byron said he would be almost content to father Southey's poetry if he might have its author's head and shoulders. I cannot say what percentage of ugly children turn out handsome later in life, but certainly many do, partly because in earlier life the various parts of the face have developed at somewhat unequal rates, and partly because of the influence of another factor of beauty, in which Southey was rich, and of which we shall have more to say later on. Its old-fashioned but familiar name is the soul.

Least of all let young mothers be perturbed by the appearance of their children in early infancy. It is not fair to judge any baby by our standards. The muscles of the face have had no exercise, the bones underneath them are only half-formed, the mouth is bound to be meaningless—a hideous feature when seen in adult life—and the face is still a mere mask, with no mind animating it. A very short time will work wonders, and we have all seen children who were painfully

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THE QUEEN OF SPAIN.

The mouth is notably similar at both ages.

From a Photograph by Hughes & Mullins. *From a Photograph by Fransen, Madrid.*

plain at birth develop into eloquent beauty when they were only three years old.

So much by way of hope for the parents of the plain child; but there is much more to say of warning for the parents of the beautiful child. They may fondly suppose that all is well, and that they are called upon for nothing more than gratitude. Far too many instances exist to prove the contrary. As in a thousand other cases, the simple rule here is that, while we cannot create beauty, we can readily destroy it. Just similarly, we cannot prolong our lives beyond the "allotted span," but we can shorten them, and nearly all of us do. As has been said, the beauty which comes "by nature"—like reading and writing, according to Dogberry—is inimitable, but nothing is more easily destructible, and there are more ways than one of compassing its ruin. Fond parents and nurses practise not a few, and the unwise heir or heiress of beauty often practises the rest. The truth is that Dogberry, who was always wrong, was never more so than when he said, "To be a well-favoured man is the gift of Fortune."

Thus, if anything matters for beauty, the shape of the jaws does. A mark of our species is that, among the higher races, the profile of the jaws is nearly vertical, instead of protruding, as in apes, for instance, or in the lower types of men. To have the jaws *orthognathous*, instead of *prognathous*, is an absolute essential of beauty as we understand it. But a protrusive deformity of the upper jaw, at any rate, can be readily cultivated in any child by the use of the dangerous and objectionable abomination called a comforter. Hosts of ugly mouths, which we see on all sides, owe their origin to this instrument. Illustrations of its action are absent from our pages, for reasons obvious enough. The child was born with well-formed jaws and palate, of the type characteristic of our race. But the constant reflex sucking of a comforter, sometimes almost without intermission by day or by night, causes a forward growth, especially of the upper jaw, which spoils its angle, and may even lead the front teeth to appear with a forward projection, instead of absolutely straight up and down. The modern study of the mouth by dental surgeons has proved this beyond dispute, as could be readily shown if THE STRAND MAGAZINE were the place for ugly diagrams. Thus the comforter is condemned, quite apart from the possibility of having the thing dropped—perhaps upon a filthy station platform, as I have seen—and then inserted

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From a Photograph by Hughes & Mullins.



From a Photograph by Lallie Charles.

PRINCESS PATRICIA OF CONNAUGHT.

These photographs show us the unmoulded mouth of the child developed into the delicate, well-defined mouth of the young woman.

directly into a baby's mouth. No baby needs a comforter; its use is only an excuse for idleness and a substitute for proper attention to the infant's needs. There is no occasion to think of a natural child as like a youth who has to be sucking a cigarette to find life tolerable.

However, there is something more to say about the microbes that may be introduced into a child's mouth by a comforter, for they may play a part in the production of that great enemy of beauty, adenoid growth in the nose and throat. Eight per cent. of our school children have adenoids at the present time, and if we wanted to be a beautiful nation, to say nothing of being a healthy one, we should waste no time before removing them, a process which only takes about ninety seconds. Most of us will agree that Jewish children are often remarkable for the beauty of their faces, a beauty which depends partly upon their expressive eyes and eyelids, and partly upon the appearance of intelligence, a great factor of beauty, and one in which the Jewish race is pre-eminently rich. But it would be bold to say that adult Jews, on the average, are conspicuously beautiful. Too often they fail to justify the promise of childhood. I speak here of Jews in our cities, and not, let us say, of the Jew in Palestine. Now, it is well known to students, and is, indeed, recognized in music-hall versions of the Jew, that he is sadly liable to adenoids, and I believe that this single fact may largely account for the contrast too often seen between the Jewish child and the Jewish adult.

No one with adenoids can hope to retain the beauty which was conditionally promised him or her by Nature. All Nature's promises are conditional. Thus, if I am asked what percentage of plain children may turn out beautiful in later life, like Southey, I do not know; but I am very well sure that the eight per cent. of children who do not get their adenoids removed must turn out plain, whatever their original possibilities may have been. Adenoids sometimes mean deafness, which makes one look stupid, and therefore less beautiful. More frequently they mean liability to colds in the head, constantly repeated, which spoil the delicate fineness of the eyelids. Worse than this, they mean mouth-breathing. The nose swells, perhaps, but, though it is bigger, it is less useful. The child is made plain by the swollen nose and the swollen eyelids, but it is made far plainer by the chronically open mouth through

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which it is compelled to breathe. No mouth-breather can possibly be beautiful. We were not meant to breathe through the mouth, and the act looks unnatural and morbid. More than that, the mouth is by far the most expressive feature of the face; in every sense it is our most speaking feature. But if it be necessarily employed for breathing through, it can never express anything but an unfortunate and unnatural predicament. Decision, kindliness, self-control, serenity—all these invaluable factors of true beauty must fail to show themselves as they should in the mouth through which its unfortunate owner is compelled to breathe.

Compared with many Oriental peoples, we are a deplorable crew in terms of beauty. Mark Twain once forcibly commented on the contrast between the faces that pass one in an Indian or in an average "Anglo-Saxon" city. I believe that this contrast is by no means entirely due to causes in heredity. Probably the crowd at Lord's on a fashionable day would be hard to beat for beauty anywhere, but you do not find eight per cent. of adenoids there. In our northern climes we are specially liable to trouble in the organs of respiration—cold in the head, adenoids, swollen tonsils; and these are specially destructive of beauty. Every mother who cares a straw about the future beauty of her child will take care that it breathes through its nose, as it naturally will, if it can. If it cannot, then its nose must be properly cleared out, until it can do the work for which it was made—work vital for more serious matters even than beauty.

But if one must warn parents against such destructors of possible beauty as the comforter and adenoids, what shall be said to warn them against neglect of the teeth? Only





MISS MARGERY MAUDE.

This shows how the parts of the child's face have grown in varying degree, so that in the young woman's face the proportions are good and make part of the face's beauty.

From a Photograph by J. Martyn *From a Photograph by Rita Martin.*

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lately have we come to realize how large a part the state of the teeth plays in our personal appearance. Most of us would be content to suppose that black or missing front teeth are to be deplored and white ones welcomed, but there is much more in it than that. Plenty of foolish people, who would consult a dentist for decay in a front tooth, will be quite indifferent to the destruction of their molars. Parents are constantly guilty in this respect, and so are young girls who are really deeply interested in their personal appearance, and are perhaps not above





MISS ELLEN TERRY.

Even the younger portrait shows the sympathetic, loving mind in eyes and mouth.

Younger Photograph by Miss Bond, lent by Messrs. Hutchinson & Co.

applying to their faces a kind of beauty which is not even skin-deep.

Yet what happens if we lose our back teeth in early life? The chewing must be done somehow, and so the front teeth are called upon to do it. They were made for biting into things, but not for chewing, and when we ask them to perform the mastication which should have devolved upon our lost grinders, they are liable to lose their perpendicularity and begin to protrude. It is very nearly all up with beauty now. No one likes projecting teeth, and no one should, for they are morbid, and an indication that something has gone wrong somewhere. Not only are they ugly in themselves, but they are liable to make it difficult to keep the lips closed, and the open mouth through which projecting teeth appear is an æsthetic disaster. Yet if the possessor had not been so foolish as to think that back teeth, which are not seen, do not matter, it might have been averted.

All our teeth are worth having for the sake of beauty. If we lose our teeth our jaws, which chiefly exist in order to hold them, are bound to atrophy. We see this clearly enough in old age. Therefore we must keep all our teeth, and our children's. They must be taught to chew properly, with the mouth

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MISS FLORENCE SMITHSON.

Shows the mouth formed by the intelligent mind in the course of years.

From a Photograph by T. Bromwich. *From a Photograph by Guttenberg.*

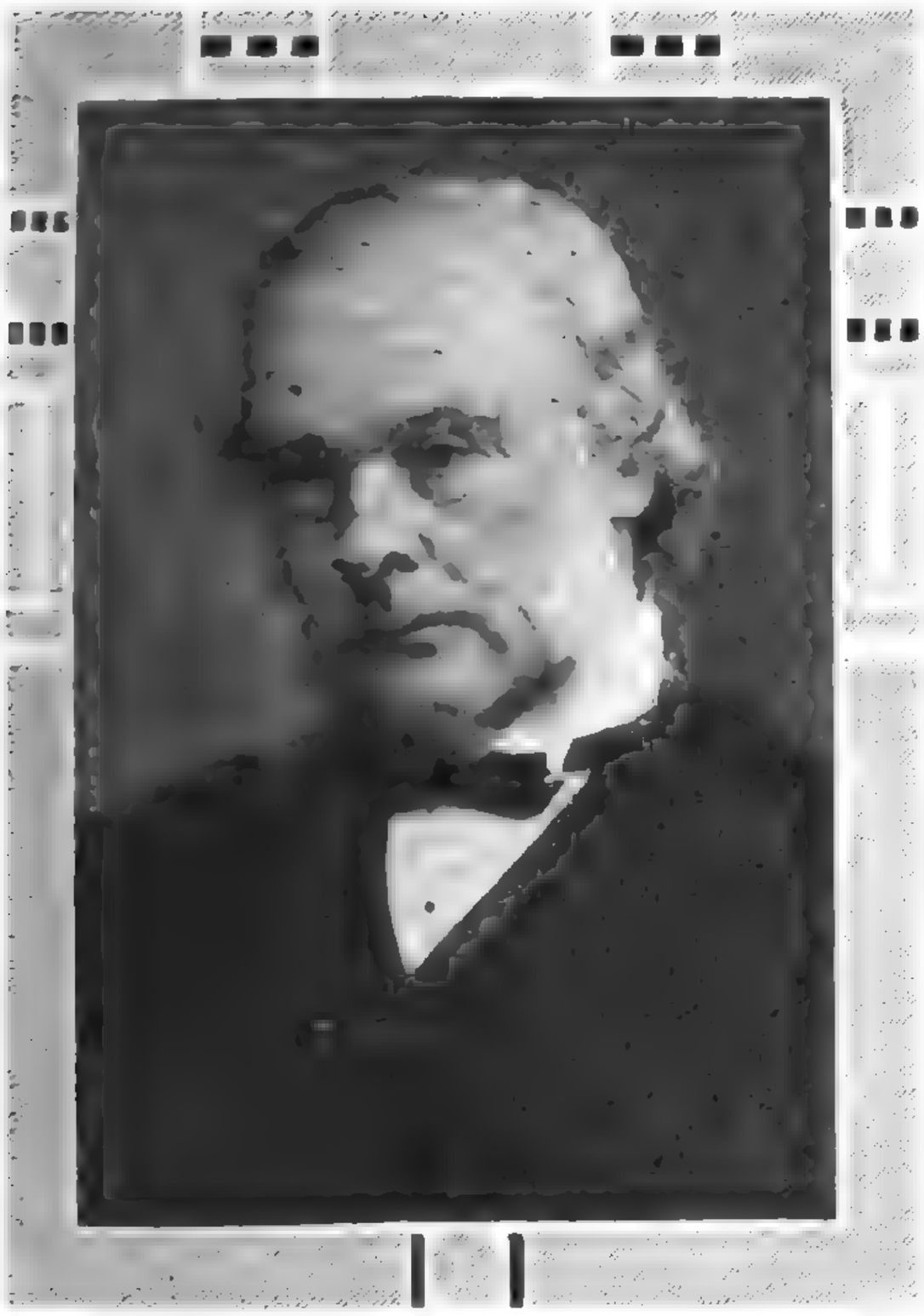
shut—which means a clear nose to breathe through. They must be given a fair amount of food that needs chewing, or they cannot in reason be expected to chew it. Things like raw apples are as attractive to Eve's descendants as they were to her, and are much more desirable. They are much to be preferred as a good-night treat to the chocolate which so many fond mothers seem to approve of. If the necks of our children's molars go to sleep in the deadly embrace of a circle of chocolate, they will not long survive that "strangle hold," and the protrusion of front teeth will be the next phenomenon.

This protrusion is not the same thing as we see in the prognathous jaw of, say, a negro. If we observe the front teeth in such a jaw, we see that they run straight up and down. A woman's jaws are normally somewhat more projecting than a man's, and this slightly enhanced conspicuousness of the mouth perhaps makes it no less attractive to her lover, but the teeth in those jaws should run straight up and down, and directly they cease to be vertical her beauty is endangered. Take care of your back teeth in youth, is the moral of these observations.

No one needs telling to take care of front teeth, but most mothers are too careless about the milk-teeth, supposing that they must soon go, and do not matter. Modern dentistry takes a different view. After all, the permanent teeth must be formed just under the temporary ones, and so, if we wish our children's permanent teeth to be well-formed, regular, and durable—the relevance of which to beauty no one will question—we should have the wisdom to take care of their milk-teeth also, and that is to be done less with the active aid of the dentist than by means of sensibly chosen food and the habit of chewing, with the use of the tooth-brush as a useful subsidiary. We should end our meals and our children's with food like fruit rather than with such things as soft biscuit, if we wish to preserve the beauty of the teeth, and some of the modern wheat foods which require chewing are much to be preferred to the preposterously sloppy things which used to be so much favoured. Of course children should chew their crusts. The old prejudice against sugar and sweet things as such is unwarranted; the finest teeth in the world are those of the West Indian negro, who is chewing sugar-cane all day—but then he is *chewing* it.

Our study of the supposedly skin-deep

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LORD LISTER.

The eyes and mouth show the thinker, the searcher, the man familiar with tragedy, "another Herakles, battling with death and pain."

From a Photograph by Elliott & Fry.



J. FORBES ROBERTSON.

Cover the mouth, and observe how much the face loses.

From a Photograph by Histed.

thing called beauty has gone as far back as the back teeth and the back of the throat and nose, but it has not gone far enough yet. The truth is that adult beauty—nay, beauty at any age except infancy—depends far more than we realize upon the mind and its state. Beauty, like youth, is really a state of the soul, not of the body.

It is said that the eyes are the windows of the soul, and they are so to some extent. The dull person, or the person who will not be bothered to be courteous and interested in us, shows his native ugliness of mind in the immobility of his eyelids. The interested person, with a mind which may or may not be quick, but is certainly sensitive and responsive, has active eyes and eyelids, which affect us so pleasantly that they count for beauty, as they should. Smiling creases the skin round the eyes, and therefore advisers are to be found who say that beauty is best to be preserved by cultivating an expressionless face, so as to avoid crows' feet. It is poor advice, based on a superficial view of beauty which does not work out in practice. No one is ever the less beautiful for lines on the face—if only they are in the right places.

What is true of the eyes is far more true of the mouth, an organ so expressive and significant, so capable of richness in beauty, that no bearded face can ever have the beauty of such a shaven face as shows a beautiful mouth. We have only to look at a beautiful face of which the mouth is beautiful, and then to cloak the lower part of the face with hair, in order to see what the mouth counts for in our estimation of beauty.

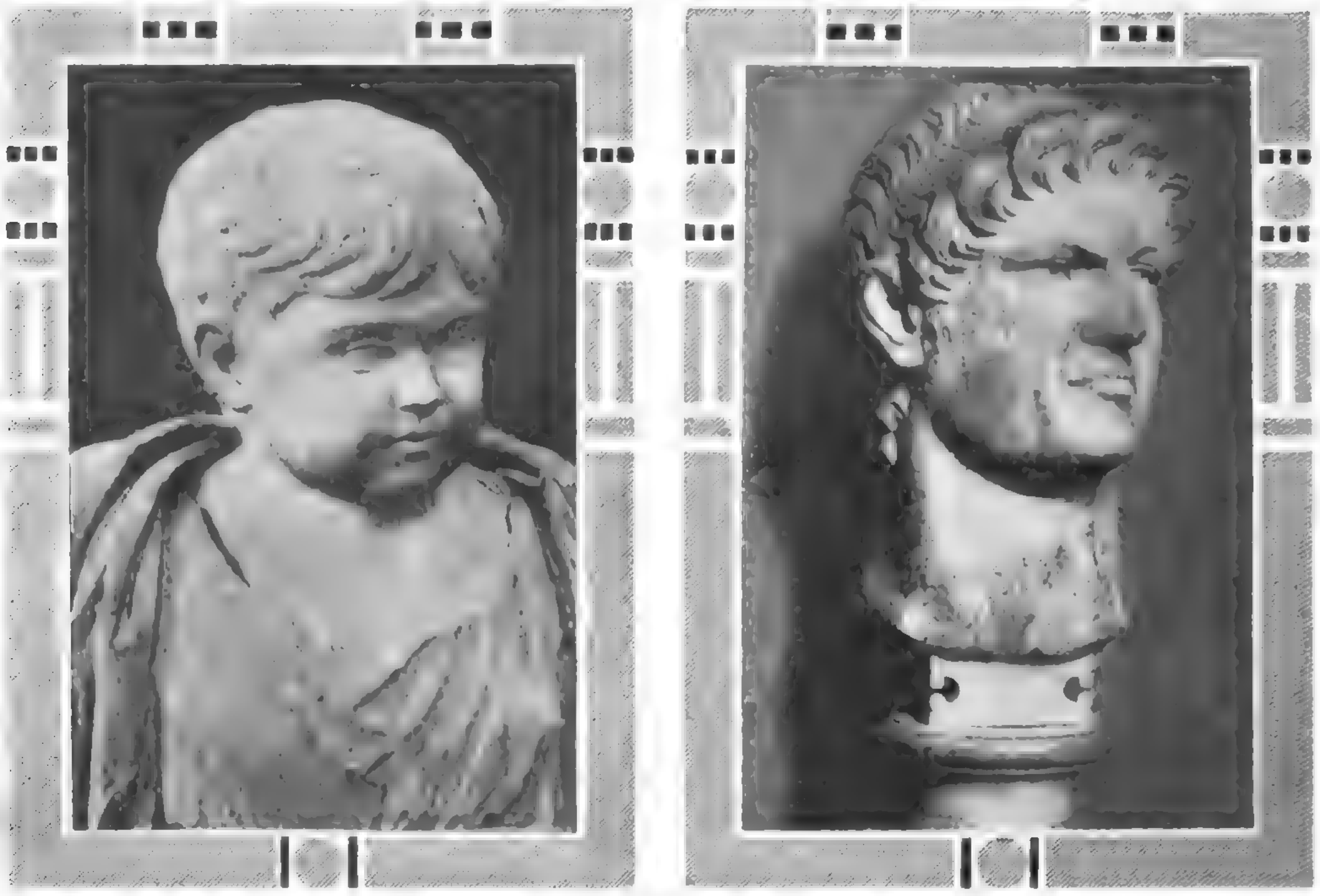
But the infant's mouth is quite meaningless. The truth is that we make our mouths ourselves. On the physical side it is essential that the child be not allowed to breathe through the mouth, that all its teeth be cared for, and that the palate be not deformed by a "comforter." But these are only the physical preliminaries. The rest we do for ourselves, and what we may do it would be only too easy to prove by photographs showing how beauty in childhood has been succeeded by plainness in maturity. The beauty which counts in the long run, and which alone retains its power, is beauty of expression, which resides, above all, in the mouth and the lines round it. Darwin showed long ago, in his great book on "The Expression of the Emotions," that we have

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in our faces various sets of muscles—the grief muscles, the anger muscles, and so forth—which are used for the expression of certain definite emotions. The habitual use of these muscles leads to a definite creasing of the skin of the face, just as the use of the muscles of the palm creases the skin there. We all thus draw our own portrait, with masterly draughtsmanship, in a few convincing lines upon the skin of our faces—that skin which is a blank in infancy, and little more in childhood. The cruel man, like Nero; the kind man, like Lord Shaftesbury; the thoughtful man, like John Stuart Mill, register their profoundest characteristics in their own faces, in lives which any child, and many animals, can read. We can all paint one portrait as well as Velazquez or Mr. Sargent, and that is our own; we can and we must.

Here, then, is the unknown but potent factor which has to be allowed for when we look at the beautiful child, with its regular features, its wonderful young skin, the most adorable and inimitable tissue under the sky, its fresh white teeth, its clear and lustrous eyes. All these are good, so far as they go, and so long as they last. But the essential individual does not yet appear. The mouth and the skin round it are little more as yet than an untouched canvas. In years to come every feature of physical beauty may be retained, but the beholder will exact requirements which he does not look for in the child. Is that mouth now sullen, selfish, kindly, lax, stern, mobile, rigid? Do the corners go up or down? Are the lines from the nose to the corners of the mouth those of frankness or suspicion, contempt, cunning, or charity? In such questions we discern the moral factor of beauty, which makes it a worthy subject for any philosopher or poet.



NERO.

The child's face foreshadows evil to come. In the adult the angry contraction of the inner ends of the eyebrows, the snarling retraction of the upper lip, and the sensual protrusion of the lower, paint with lamentable and horrible fidelity the portrait of the monster's mind.

The parent who is interested in a child's beauty will have to reckon with these facts. No words can over-estimate their importance. In photographs of beautiful children who have become beautiful adults it is beauty of expression, inexorably limned upon the face, that we delight in. The beautiful children who have since drawn other portraits of themselves need no illustration here; they are to be met everywhere. But this is the beauty to which a man returns, never sated; beauty which the touch of Time only reveals more clearly, and which justifies, in its noblest feminine manifestations, the words of Ruskin, that woman was "born to be love visible."

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WET MAGIC



A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

By E. NESBIT.

Illustrated by H. R. Millar.

and flap dismally in the wind. There is always a good deal of straw and torn paper and dust at this end of the village, and bits of dirty rag, and old boots and tins are found under the hedges where flowers ought to be. Some people like this, and see nothing to hate in such ugly waste places as the one, at the wrong end of the town, where the fair was being held on that never-to-be-forgotten day when Francis, Mavis, Bernard, and Kathleen set out, in their best clothes, to rescue the mermaid because mermaids "die in captivity."

The fair had none of those stalls and booths which old-fashioned fairs used to have, where they sold toys and gilt gingerbread and carters' whips and cups and saucers and mutton-pies and dolls and china dogs and shell boxes and pincushions and needle-cases and penholders with views of the Isle of Wight and Winchester Cathedral inside that you see so bright and plain when you put your eye close to the little round hole at the top.

The big tent that held the circus was at the top of the ground, and the people who were busy among the ropes and pegs and between the bright vans resting on their shafts seemed gayer and cleaner than the people who kept the little arrangements for people not to win prizes at. It seemed a long time before the circus opened, but at last the flap of the tent was pinned back and a gipsy-looking woman with oily black ringlets and eyes like bright black beads came out at the

CHAPTER III.

THERE is a piece of waste land just beyond Beachfield on the least agreeable side of that village—the side where the flat-faced shops are, and the yellow-brick houses. Here also are gaunt hoardings, plastered with ugly-coloured posters. Some of the corners of the posters are always loose

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side to take the money of those who wished to see the circus. Of these our four were the very first, and the gipsy woman took the warm silver sixpences from Mavis's hand.

"Walk in, walk in, my little dears, and see the white elephant," said a stout, black-moustached man in evening dress—greenish it was, and shiny about the seams. He flourished a long whip as he spoke, and the children stopped, although they had paid their sixpences, to hear what they were to see when they did walk in—"the white elephant, tail, trunk, and tusks, all complete, sixpence only. Walk up! walk up! See the trained wolves and wolverines in their great national dance with the flags of all countries. Walk up! walk up! walk up! See the educated seals and the unique Lotus of the Heast in her famous bare-backed act, riding three horses at once, the wonder and envy of Royalty. Walk up and see the very-table mermaid, caught on your own coast only yesterday as ever was!"

"Thank you," said Francis, "I think we will." And the four went through the opened canvas flap into the pleasant yellow dusty twilight which was the inside of a squarish sort of tent, with an opening at the end, and through it you could see the sawdust-covered ring of the circus and benches all round it and two men just finishing covering the front benches with red cotton strips.

"Where's the mermaid?" Mavis asked a little boy in tights and a spangled cap.

"In there," he said, pointing to a little canvas door at the side of the squarish tent. "I don't advise you to touch her, though. Spiteful, she is. Lashes out with her tail—splashed old Mother Lee all over water, she did—an' dangerous, too. Our Bill 'e got 'is bone set out in his wrist a-trying to hold on to her. An' it's thruppence extry to see her close."

The children had, fortunately, plenty of money, because mother had given them two half-crowns between them to spend as they liked.

"Even then," said Bernard, in allusion to the threepence extra, "we shall have two bob left.

So Mavis, who was treasurer, paid over the extra threepences to a girl with hair as fair and lank as hemp, and a face as brown and round as a tea-cake, who sat on a kitchen chair by the mermaid's door. Then, one by one, they went in through the narrow opening, and at last there they were alone in the little canvas room with a tank in it that held—well, there was a large label, evidently written in a hurry, for the letters were badly made and arranged quite crookedly, and this label declared:—

REAL LIVE MERMAID!
Said to be fabulous, but now true.
CAUGHT HERE.
Please do not touch.
DANGEROUS!

The little spangled boy had followed them in, and pointed to the last word.

"What I tell you?" he asked, proudly.

The children looked at each other. Nothing could be done with this witness at hand. At least——

"Perhaps if it's going to be magic," Mavis whispered to Francis, "outsiders wouldn't notice. They don't sometimes—I believe. Suppose you just said a bit of Sabrina to start the magic?"

"Wouldn't be safe," Francis returned, in the same low tones. "Suppose he *wasn't* an outsider, and *did* notice?"

So there they stood helpless. What the label was hung on was a large zinc tank—the kind that they have at the tops of houses for the water supply. The tank was full of water, and at the bottom of it could be seen a mass of something dark that looked as if it were partly browny-green fish and partly greeny-brown seaweed.

"Sabrina fair," Francis suddenly whispered, "send him away."

And immediately a voice from outside called "Rube! Reuben! Drat the boy! where's he got to?" and the little spangled intruder had to go.

"There, now," said Mavis, "if *that* isn't magic!"

Perhaps it was—but still the dark fish-and-seaweed heap in the tank had not stirred.

"Say it all through," said Mavis.

"Yes, do," said Bernard; "then we shall know for certain whether it's a seal or not."

So once again—

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy cool translucent wave——

He got no farther. There was a heaving and stirring of the seaweed and fish-tail—something gleamed white. Through the brown something white parted the seaweed—two white hands parted it—and a face came to the surface of the rather dirty water and—there was no doubt about it—spoke.

"'Translucent wave,' indeed!" was what the face said. "I wonder you're not ashamed to speak the invocation over a miserable cistern like this. What do you want?"

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Brown hair and seaweed still veiled most of the face, but all the children, who, after their first start back, had pressed close to the tank again, could see that the face looked exceedingly cross.

"We want," said Francis, in a voice that *would* tremble, though he told himself again and again that he was not a baby and wasn't going to behave like one—"we want to help you."

"Help *me?* You!" She raised herself a little more in the tank and looked contemptuously at them. "Why, don't you know that I am mistress of all water magic? I can raise a storm that will sweep away this horrible place and my detestable captors and you with them, and carry me on the back of a great wave down to the depths of the sea."

"Then why on earth don't you?" Bernard asked.

"Well, I was thinking about it," she said, a little awkwardly, "when you interrupted with your spells. Well, you've called and I've answered. Now tell me what I can do for you."

"We've told you," said Mavis, gently enough, though she was frightfully disappointed that the mermaid, after having in the handsomest manner turned out to *be* a mermaid, should be such a very short-tempered one. And when they had talked about her all day and paid the threepence each extra to see her close, and put on their best white dresses too. "We've told you—



"'WALK IN, WALK IN, MY LITTLE DEARS, AND SEE THE WHITE ELEPHANT,' SAID A STOUT, BLACK-MOUSTACHED MAN IN EVENING DRESS."

we want to help you. Another Sabrina in the sea told us to. *She* didn't tell us anything about you being a magic-mistress. She just said, 'They die in captivity.'"

"Well, thank you for coming," said the mermaid. "If she really said that, it must be one of two things. Either the sun is in the House of Libra—which is impossible at this time of the year—or else the rope I was caught with must be made of llama's hair—and *that's* impossible in these latitudes. Do you know anything about the rope they caught me with?"

"No," said Bernard and Kathleen. But the others said: "It was a lariat."

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"Ah!" said the mermaid. "My worst fears are confirmed. But who could have expected a lariat on these shores? But that must have been it. Now I know why, though I have been on the point of working the Magic of the Great Storm at least five hundred times since my capture, some unseen influence has always held me back."

"You mean," said Bernard, "you feel that it wouldn't work, so you didn't try."

A rattling, rippling sound outside, beginning softly, waxed louder and louder, so as almost to drown their voices. It was the drum, and it announced the beginning of the circus. The spangled child put his head in and said, "Hurry up, or you'll miss my Infant Prodigious act on the horse with the tambourines," and took his head out again.

"Oh, dear!" said Mavis, "and we haven't arranged a single thing about rescuing you."

"No more you have," said the mermaid, carelessly.

"Look here," said Francis, "you do *want* to be rescued, don't you?"

"Of course I do," replied the mermaid, impatiently, "now I know about the llama-rope. But I can't walk, even if they'd let me, and you couldn't carry me. Couldn't you come at dead of night with a chariot—I could lift myself into it with your aid—then you could drive swiftly hence and drive into the sea. I could drop from the chariot and escape while you swam ashore."

"I don't believe we could—any of it," said Bernard; "let alone swimming ashore with horses and chariots. Why, even Pharaoh couldn't do that, you know." And even Mavis and Francis added, helplessly, "I don't see how we're to get a chariot" and "Do think of some other way."

"I shall await you," said the lady in the tank, with perfect calmness, "at dead of night."

With that she twisted the seaweed closely round her head and shoulders and sank slowly to the bottom of the tank. And the children were left staring blankly at each other, while in the circus-tent music sounded and the soft, heavy pad, pad of hoofs on sawdust.

"What shall we do?" Francis broke the silence.

"Go and see the circus, of course," said Bernard.

"Of course, we can talk about the chariot afterwards," Mavis admitted.

There is nothing like a circus for making you forget your anxieties. It is impossible to dwell on your troubles and difficulties when performing dogs are displaying their accomplishments or wolves dancing their celebrated dance with the flags of all nations; and the engaging lady who jumps through the paper hoops and comes down miraculously on the flat back of the white horse cannot but drive dull care away, especially from the minds of the young. So that for an hour and a half—it really was a good circus, and I can't think how it happened to be at Beachfield Fair at all—a solid slab of breathless enjoyment was wedged in between the interview with the mermaid and the difficult task of procuring for her the chariot she wanted. But when it was all over and they were part of a hot, tightly-packed crowd pouring out of the dusty tent into the sunshine their responsibilities came upon them with renewed force.

"Wasn't the clown ripping?" said Bernard, as they got free of the crowd.

"I liked the riding-habit lady best," said Kathleen.

"Didn't you think the elephant——" Mavis was beginning, when Francis interrupted her.

"About that chariot," he said; and after that they talked of nothing else. And whatever they said, it always came to this in the end—that they hadn't got a chariot and couldn't get a chariot, and that anyhow they didn't suppose there was a chariot to *be* got—in Beachfield, at any rate.

"It wouldn't be any good, I suppose," was Kathleen's last and most helpful suggestion—"be the slightest good saying 'Sabrina fair' to a pumpkin?"

"We haven't got even a pumpkin," Bernard reminded her, "let alone the rats and mice and lizards that Cinderella had. No, that's no good. But I'll tell you what." He stopped short. They were near home now. "What about a wheelbarrow?"

"Not big enough," said Francis.

"There's an extra big one in the mill," said Bernard. "Now look here. I'm not any good at magic. But Uncle Tom said I was a born general. If I tell you exactly what to do, will you two do it, and let Cathay and me off going?"

"Going to sneak out of it?" Francis asked, bitterly.

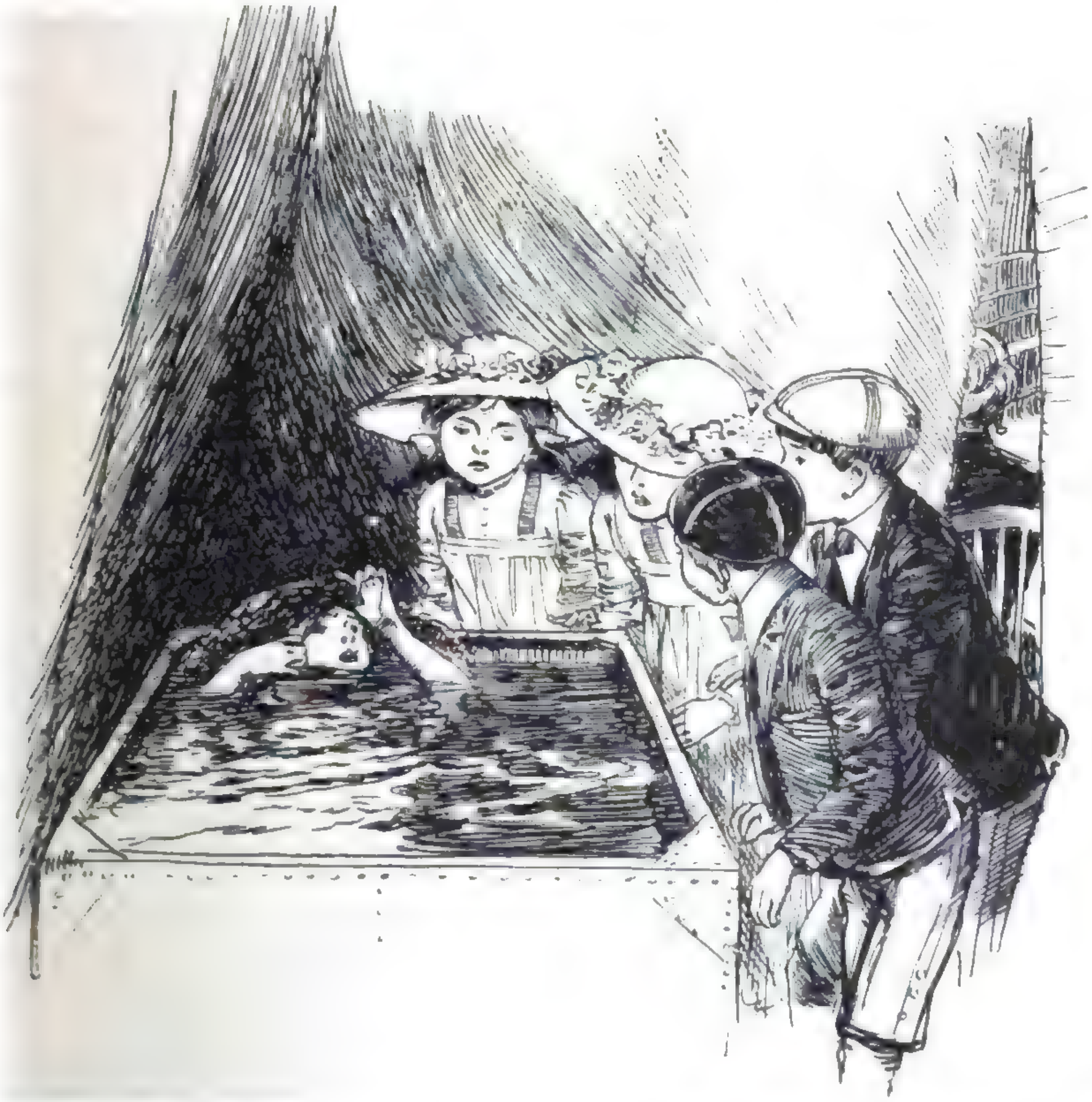
"It isn't. It's not my game at all—and I don't want to play. And if I do the whole thing will be muffed—you know it will. I'm so unlucky. You'd never get out at dead of night without me dropping a boot on the stairs or sneezing. You know you wouldn't."

Bernard took a sort of melancholy pride

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in being the kind of boy who always gets caught. If you are that sort of boy perhaps that's the best way to take it. And Francis could not deny that there was something in what he said. He went on. "Then Kathleen's my special sister, and I'm not going to have her dragged into a row. So will you and Mavis do it on your own or not?"

After some discussion, in which Kathleen was tactfully dealt with, it was agreed that they would. Then Bernard unfolded his plan of campaign.



"A FACE CAME TO THE SURFACE OF THE RATHER DIRTY WATER AND—THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT—SPOKE."

"Directly we get home," he said, "we'll begin larking about with that old wheelbarrow—giving each other rides, and so on—and when it's time to go in we'll leave it at the far end of the field behind the old sheep-hut near the gate. Then it'll be handy for you at dead of night. You must take towels or something to tie round the wheel so that it doesn't make a row. You can sleep with my toy alarum under your pillow, and it won't wake anyone but you. You get out through the dining-room window, and in the same way. You'd better take a knife to cut the canvas, and go by the back lane that comes out behind where the circus is, but if you took my advice you wouldn't go. She's not a nice mermaid at all. I'd rather have had a seal, any day. Halloa! there's daddy and mother. Come on!"

They came on.

The programme sketched by Bernard was carried out without a hitch. Everything went well—only Francis and Mavis were both astonished to find themselves so much more frightened than they had expected to be. Any really great adventure, like the rescuing of a mermaid, does always look so very much more serious when you carry it out at night than it did when you were planning it in the daytime. Also, though they knew they were not doing anything wrong, they had an uncomfortable feeling that mother and daddy might not agree with them on that point. And of course they could not ask leave to go and rescue a mermaid with a chariot at dead of night. It is not the sort of thing you *can*

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ask, somehow. And the more you explained your reasons the less grown-up people would think you fitted to conduct such an expedition.

Francis lay down fully dressed under his nightshirt. And Mavis, under hers, wore her short blue skirt and jersey.

The alarum, true to its trust, went off with an ear-splitting whiz and bang under the pillow of Francis, but no one else heard it. He crept cautiously into Mavis's room and wakened her, and as they crept down in stockinged feet not a board creaked. The French window opened without noise, the wheelbarrow was where they had left it, and they had fortunately brought quite enough string to bind wads of towels and stockings to the tyre of its wheel. Also they had not forgotten the knife.

The wheelbarrow was heavy, and they rather shrank from imagining how much heavier it would be when the discontented mermaid was curled up in it. However, they took it in turns, and got along all right by the back lane that comes out above the waste ground where Beachfield holds its fairs.

"I hope the night's dead enough," Mavis whispered, as the circus came in sight, looking very white in the starlight. "It's nearly two by now, I should think."

"Quite dead enough, if that's all," said Francis; "but suppose the gipsies are awake? They do sit up to study astronomy to tell fortunes with, don't they? Suppose this is their astronomy night? I vote we leave the barrow here and go and reconnoitre."

They did. Their sand-shoes made no noise on the dewy grass, and, treading very carefully on tiptoe, they came to the tent. Francis nearly tumbled over a guy-rope—just saw it in time to avoid it. "If I'd been Bernard I should have come a beastly noisy cropper over that," he told himself. They crept round the tent till they came to the little square bulge that marked the place where the tank was, and the seaweed and the mermaid.

"They die in captivity—they die in captivity—they die in captivity," Mavis kept repeating to herself, trying to keep up her courage by reminding herself of the desperately urgent nature of the adventure. "It's a matter of life and death," she told herself —"life and death."

And now they picked their way between the pegs and guy-ropes, and came quite close to the canvas. Doubts of the strength and silence of the knife possessed the trembling soul of Francis. Mavis's heart was beating so thickly that, as she said afterwards, she could hardly hear herself think. She scratched gently on the canvas. An answering signal from the imprisoned mermaid would, she felt, give her fresh confidence. There was no answering scratch. Instead, a dark line appeared to run up the canvas; it was an opening made by the two hands of the mermaid, which held back the two halves of the tent-side—cut neatly from top to bottom. Her white face peered out.

"Where is the chariot?" she asked, in the softest of whispers, but not too soft to carry to the children the feeling that she was, if possible, crosser than ever.

Francis was afraid to answer. He knew that his voice could never be subdued to anything as soft as the voice that questioned him —a voice like the sound of tiny waves on a summer night, like the whisper of wheat when the wind passes through it on a summer morning. But he pointed towards the lane where they had left the wheelbarrow, and he and Mavis crept away to fetch it.

As they wheeled it down the waste place both felt how much they owed to Bernard. But for his idea of muffling the wheel they could never have got the clumsy great thing down that bumpy, uneven slope. But as it was they and the barrow stole towards the gipsy's tent as silently as the Arabs in the poem stole away with theirs, and wheeled it close to the riven tent-side. Then Mavis scratched again, and again the tent opened.

"Have you any cords?" the soft voice whispered, and Francis pulled what was left of the string from his pocket.

She had made two holes in the tent-side, and now, passing the string through these, she tied back the flaps of the tent.

"Now," she said, raising herself in the tank and resting her hands on its side. "You must both help; take hold of my tail and lift. Creep in—one on each side."

It was a wet, sloppy, slippery, heavy business, and Mavis thought her arms would break—but she kept saying "Die in captivity," and just as she was feeling that she could not bear it another minute the strain slackened, and there was the mermaid curled up in the barrow.

"Now," said the soft voice, "go—quickly."

It was all very well to say "Go quickly." It was as much as the two children could do, with that barrow-load of dripping mermaid, to go at all. And very, very slowly they crept up the waste space. In the lane, under cover of the tall hedges, they paused.

"Go on!" said the mermaid.

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"We can't till we're rested a bit," said Mavis, panting. "How did you manage to get that canvas cut?"

"My shell-knife, of course," said the person in the wheelbarrow. "We always carry one in our hair, in case of sharks."

"I see," said Francis, breathing heavily.

"You had much better go on," said the barrow's occupant. "This chariot is excessively uncomfortable and much too small. Besides, delays are dangerous."

"We'll go on in half a sec," said Francis, and Mavis added kindly:—

"You're really quite safe now, you know."

"*You* aren't," said the mermaid. "I don't know whether you realize that I'm stolen property, and that it will be extremely awkward for you if you are caught with me."

"But we sha'n't be caught with you," said Mavis, hopefully.

"Everybody's sound asleep," said Francis.



"IT WAS A WET, SLOPPY, SLIPPERY, HEAVY BUSINESS."

It was wonderful how brave and confident they felt now that the deed was done. "It's perfectly safe. Oh! what's that? Oh!"

A hand had shot out from the black shadow of the hedge and caught him by the arm.

"What is it, France—what is it?" said

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"A HAND HAD SHOT OUT FROM THE BLACK SHADOW OF THE HEDGE AND CAUGHT HIM BY THE ARM."

Mavis, who could not see what was happening.

"What is it now—what is it?" asked the mermaid, more crossly than she had yet spoken.

"*Who* is it? Oh! who is it?" gasped Francis, writing in the grip of his invisible assailant. And from the dark shadow of the hedge came the simple and terrible reply:—

"The Police!"

(*To be continued.*)

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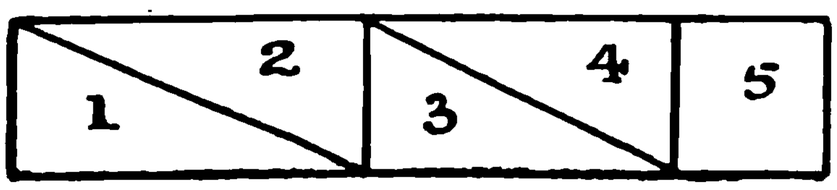
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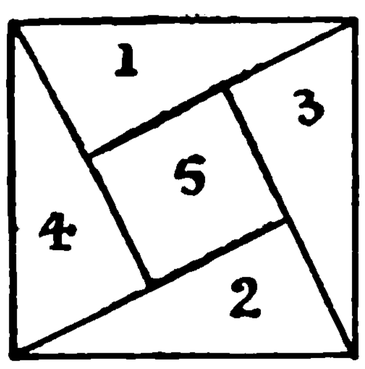
PERPLEXITIES.

With Some Easy Puzzles for Beginners. By Henry E. Dudeney.

109.—A CUTTING-OUT PUZZLE.

HERE is a little cutting-out poser. I take a strip of paper, measuring five inches by one inch, and, by cutting it into five pieces, the parts fit together and





form a square, as shown in the illustration (see also our No. 101). Now, it is quite an interesting puzzle to discover how we can do this in only four pieces.

110.—A NEW MATCH MYSTERY.

THIS is a little game that will tie your brains into knots. So far as I know it is quite new, and has never appeared in print. It is childishly simple in its conditions, and a good companion to the Squire's game given in our last issue.

Mr. Stubbs pulled a small table between himself and his friend, Mr. Wilson, and took a box of matches, from which he counted out thirty.

"Here are thirty matches," he said. "I divide them into three unequal heaps. Let me see. We have 14, 11, and 5, as it happens. Now, the two players draw alternately any number from any one heap, and he who draws the last match loses the game. That's all! I will play with you, Wilson. I have formed the heaps, so you have the first draw."

"As I can draw any number," Mr. Wilson said, "suppose I exhibit my usual moderation and take all the 14 heap."

"That is the worst you could do, for it loses right away. I take 6 from the 11, leaving two equal heaps of 5, and to leave two equal heaps is a certain win (with the single exception of 1, 1), because whatever you do in one heap I can repeat in the other. If you leave 4 in one heap, I leave 4 in the other. If you then leave 2 in one heap, I leave 2 in the other. If you leave only 1 in one heap, then I take all the other heap. If you take all one heap, I take all but one in the other. No, you must never leave two heaps, unless they are equal heaps and more than 1, 1. Let's begin again."

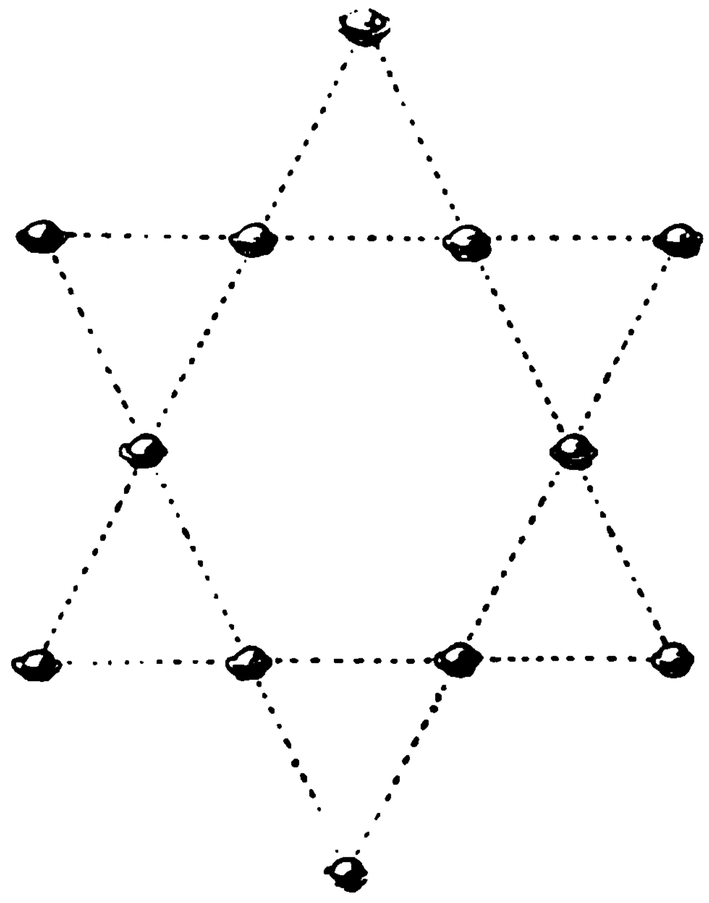
"Very well, then," said Mr. Wilson, "I will take 6 from the 14 and leave you 8, 11, 5."

Mr. Stubbs then left 8, 11, 3; Mr. Wilson, 8, 5, 3; Mr. Stubbs, 6, 5, 3; Mr. Wilson, 4, 5, 3; Mr. Stubbs, 4, 3, 1; Mr. Wilson, 4, 3, 1; Mr. Stubbs, 2, 3, 1; Mr. Wilson, 2, 1, 1; which Mr. Stubbs reduced to 1, 1, 1,

"It is now quite clear that I must win," said Mr. Stubbs, because you must take 1, and then I take 1, leaving you the last match. You happened to play into a sequence that I know, and you never had a chance. The fact is, there are just thirteen different ways in which the matches may be grouped at the start for a certain win. But unless you have all the winning groups in your memory, it is practically a game of chance. In fact, the groups selected, 14, 11, 5, are a certain win, because for whatever your opponent may play there is another winning group you can secure, and so on and on down to the last match."

111.—THE TWELVE MINCE-PIES.

IT will be seen in our illustration how twelve mince-pies may be placed on the table so as to form six straight rows with four pies in every row. The puzzle



is to remove only four of them to new positions so that there shall be *seven* straight rows with four in every row. Which four would you remove, and where would you replace them?

EASY PUZZLES.

112.—MATCHES PUZZLE.—Can you place three matches on the table, and support the match-box on them, without allowing the heads of the matches to touch the table, to touch one another, or to touch the box?

113.—THE BOX OF SWEETS.—I bought a box of sweets for twopence-halfpenny. The sweets cost twopence more than the box. What did the box cost? See how many of your friends will be tripped up by this very simple question.

114.—ANAGRAMS.—Can you make a common English word out of the letters of EARLY BAT? ("Rateably" is not a word.) Can you also form another word from I HIRE PARSONS?

115.—MISSING WORDS.—The five missing words in the following verse each contain the same letters. What are the words?

Far from the railway's . . . . . and noise,
Along the pleasant country side;
Where each bird . . . . . and sings with joy,
Where ploughmen lead their . . . . . with pride,
The rider . . . . . his fiery steed,
But soon on . . . . . and wine will feed.

116.—DIGITS AND SQUARES.—It will be seen that we have so arranged the nine digits in a square that the number in the second row (3, 8, 4) is twice that in the first row, and the number in the bottom row three times that in the top row. There are three other ways of arranging the digits so as to produce the same result. Can you find them?

1	9	2
3	8	4
5	7	6

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NONSENSE BOTANY.

HUMOUR IN DOYLEYS.

This amusing set of doyleys was supplied to us by Mr. James F. F. Sintzenich, who has had them in his possession for nearly half a century, and informs us that they were drawn by a lady friend of his family. They are curiosities in their way, and show a sense of humour, as well as of draughtsmanship, which we think our readers will appreciate.









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QUAINT QUESTIONS.

By BARRY PAIN.

Illustrated by René Bull.

THERE was once a young grocer who went to see a performance of "Faust," and then supped inordinately before retiring to bed. The blend of excitement and repletion produced the following nightmare.

He dreamed that he was standing behind a counter on which was a large canister of tea. Beside it were a pair of scales and some sheets of packing paper. There were no weights for the scales, and there was nothing else in the shop.

"This is a nice sort of outfit, I *don't* think," said the grocer to himself. "If a customer comes in I shall have to put him off somehow."

At that moment Mephistopheles entered, in a red cloak fastened with a large metal clasp.

"I want a pound of that tea," said Mephistopheles, fiercely.

"Certainly, sir," said the grocer. "We will send it round almost immediately. Nice weather for the time of year, sir."

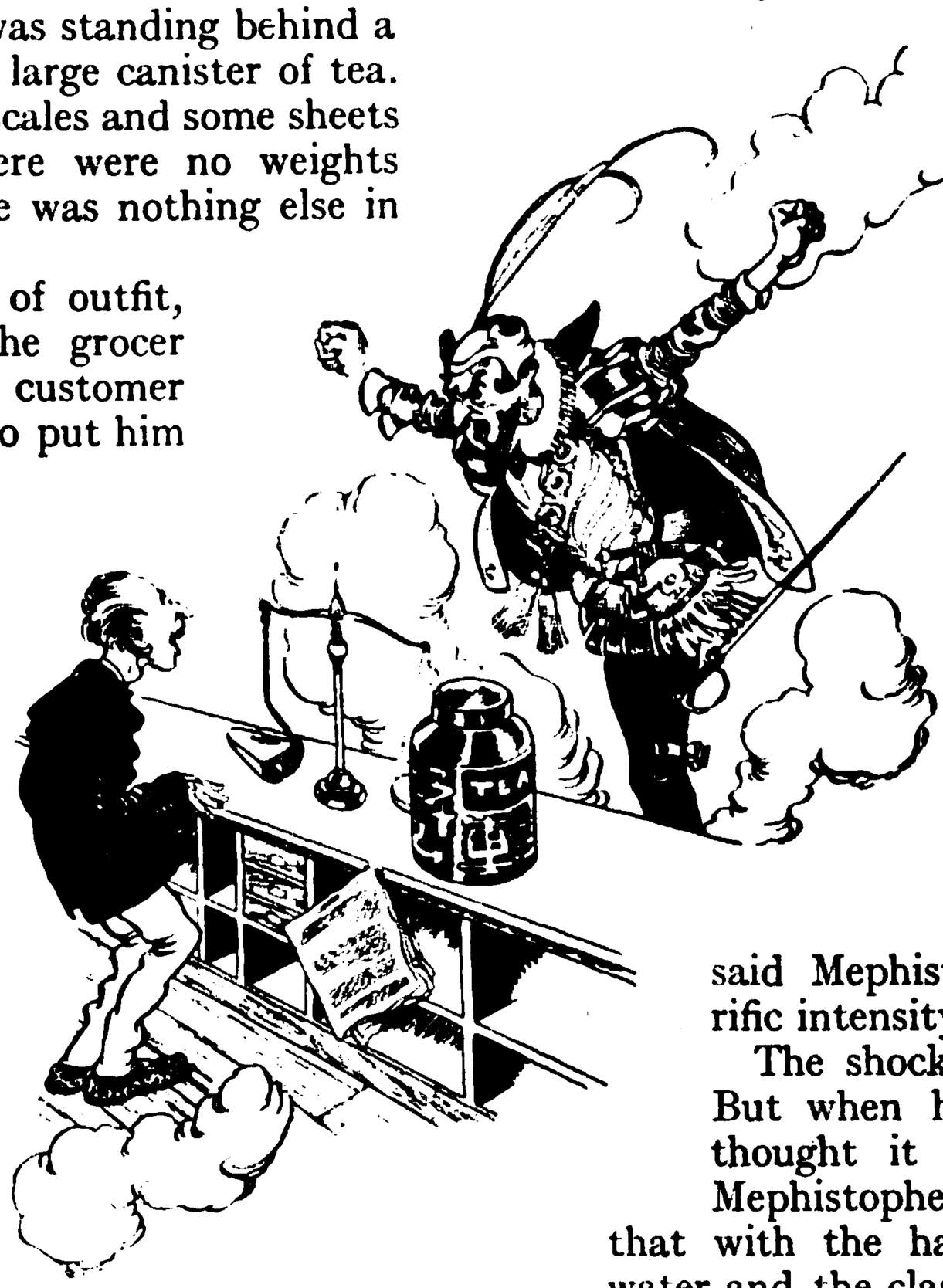
"That won't do," said Mephistopheles. "I want that pound of tea now."

"Very sorry, sir. It's a most extraordinary thing—never knew it to happen before—but our weights have just gone to be—er—synchronized."

"Aha!" said Mephistopheles. "But will one of those scale-pans hold water?"

"The right-hand one is scoop-shaped, and you could put a pint or more in it. But the other is absolutely flat, and you could do nothing with it."

"Very well," said Mephistopheles, producing a vessel from under his cloak. "This vessel, the weight of which is unknown, contains exactly half a pint of distilled water. The clasp of my cloak weighs exactly six and a half avoirdupois ounces. Take these two things and weigh me out a pound of tea—neither more nor less—and don't weigh the paper."



"'IT CAN,' SAID MEPHISTOPHELES, WITH TERRIFIC INTENSITY. 'DO IT OR DIE!'"

"But—but—it cannot be done," said the grocer.

"It can," said Mephistopheles, with terrific intensity. "Do it or die!"

The shock awoke the grocer. But when he was awake and thought it over, he saw that Mephistopheles was correct, and that with the half-pint of distilled water and the clasp weighing six and a half ounces he could have given Mephistopheles his pound of tea exactly. How?

"Out!" said the umpire, as the village clock struck.

Bulger cast one glance of undying hatred at that umpire and walked sulkily to the

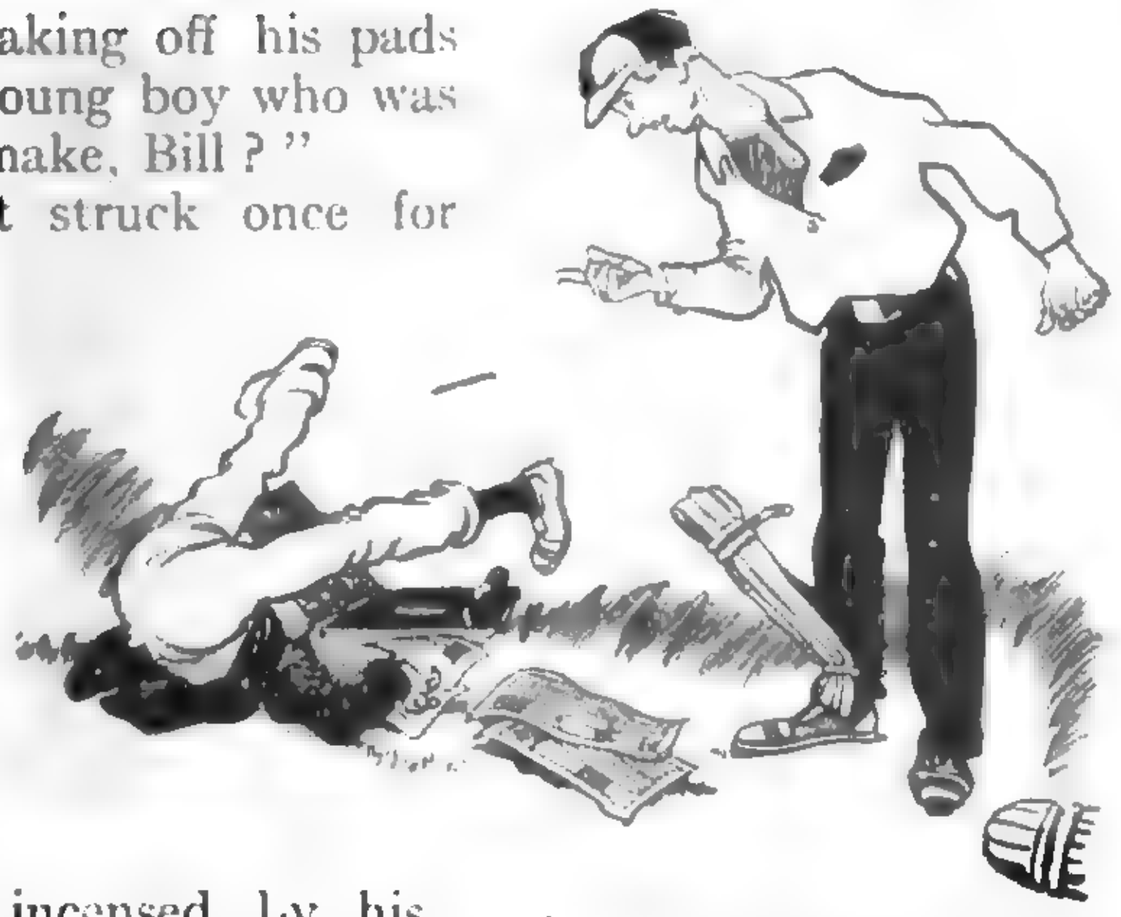
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pavilion. As he was taking off his pads he said to the bright young boy who was scoring: "What did I make, Bill?"

"The clock has just struck once for every two runs you made," said the bright young boy, glibly; "and if you had made twice as many you would have made three times the number that the clock will strike at the succeeding hour."

Whereupon Bulger, incensed by the l.b.w. decision, and further incensed by his failure to obtain a plain answer to a plain question, smote the bright young boy on the occipital protuberance, and bumped his nose against the bowling analysis.

But, speaking seriously, and calculating from Bill's statistics, what was the time by the village clock when Bulger was given out?



"HE SMOTE THE BRIGHT YOUNG BOY."

"Walk over and have tea to-morrow afternoon," said old Dr. Sharper to young Mr. Woodhead.

"Thanks," said Mr. Woodhead. "I'll start from my house at three. Suppose you start from your house at the same time and meet me. Then we shall meet half-way."

"Oh, no. I am an old man, and my pace is three miles an hour. You are young and active; you do four miles an hour. You must make some allowance for that."

"I see," said Mr. Woodhead, with that look of bright intelligence so often exhibited by the absolutely fatuous. "That makes a difference of one mile. Well, to put that right, I'll start a quarter of an hour earlier. Will that do?"

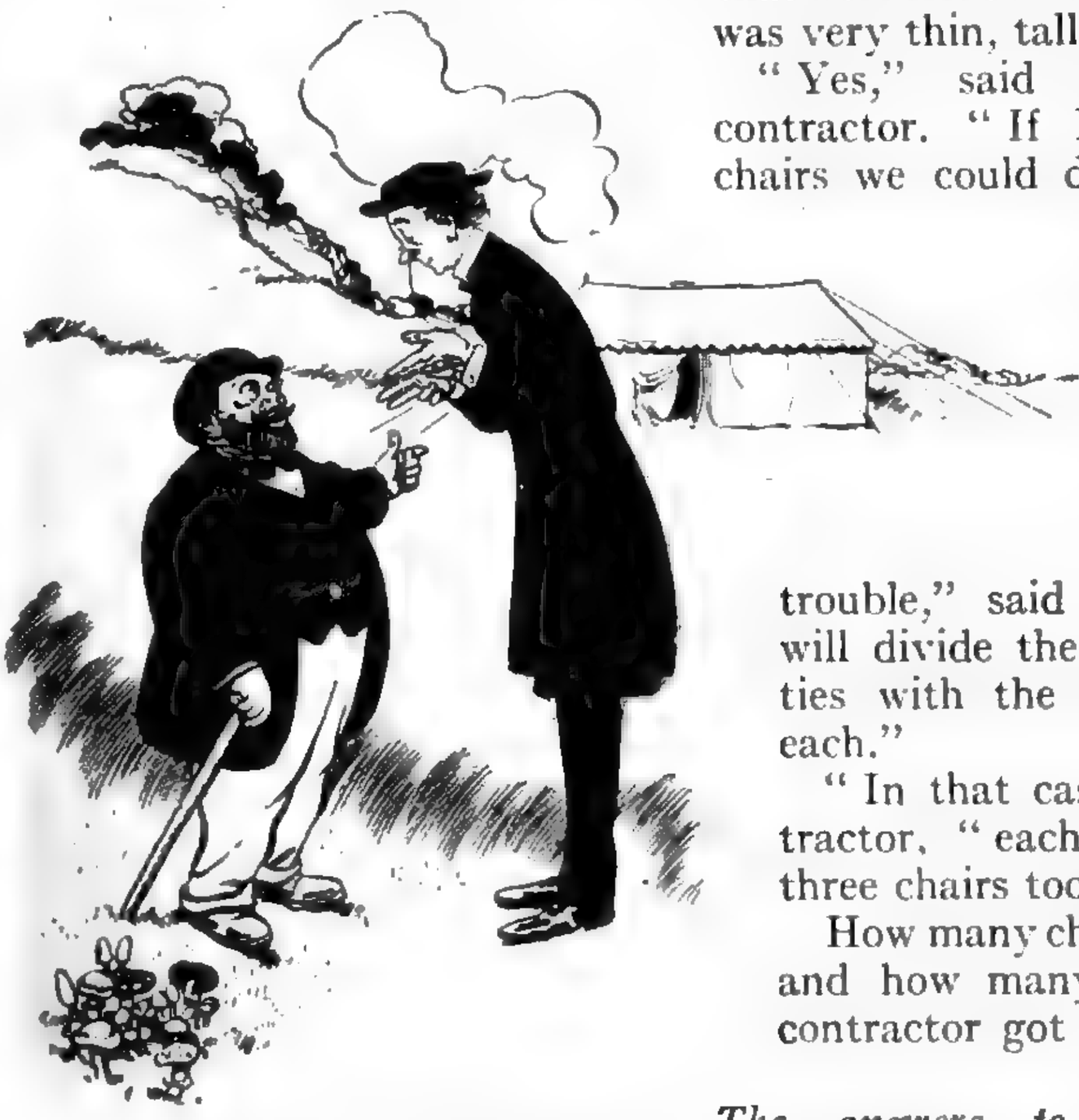
"Very nicely," said Dr. Sharper, with a mysterious smile.

So Mr. Woodhead started at two-forty-five and walked four miles an hour. Dr. Sharper started at three and walked three miles an hour. They met, and Dr. Sharper turned back to his own house again with Mr. Woodhead.

Over the tea-table Mr. Woodhead said that he must have made some mistake about that time allowance. He felt sure that when he got home at night he would have walked more than double as much as Dr. Sharper.

"You will have walked four times as much," said Dr. Sharper, and this was exactly correct.

How far was it from Dr. Sharper's house to Mr. Woodhead's house?



"'IN THAT CASE,' SAID THE CONTRACTOR, 'EACH PARTY WILL HAVE THREE CHAIRS TOO MANY.'"

A Sunday-school treat took place in a big field. It grew near to tea-time. Outside the marquee in which tea was to be served stood the refreshment contractor and the senior curate. The refreshment contractor was a fat man, because, owing to the exigencies of his business, he had to live principally on the cakes that were left over. The senior curate was very thin, tall, and scholarly.

"Yes," said the refreshment contractor. "If I had five more chairs we could do them in three parties with the same number in each. I will see if I cannot borrow five chairs somewhere."

"Don't trouble," said the curate. "I will divide them into four parties with the same number in each."

"In that case," said the contractor, "each party will have three chairs too many."

How many children were there, and how many chairs had the contractor got?

The answers to these questions, together with some fresh problems, will appear next month.

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Solutions to the Puzzles and Problems in Our Last Number.

A Set of Nutcrackers. By Henry E. Dudeney.

The following are the answers:—

QUEER RELATIONSHIPS.

If a man marries a woman, who dies, and he then marries his deceased wife's sister and himself dies, it may be correctly said that he had (previously) married the sister of his widow.

The youth was not the nephew of Jane Brown, because he happened to be her son. Her surname was the same as that of her brother because she had married a man of the same name as herself.

A LEGAL DIFFICULTY.

It was clearly the intention of the deceased to give the son twice as much as the mother, or the daughter half as much as the mother. Therefore, the most equitable division would be that the mother should take two-sevenths, the son four-sevenths, and the daughter one-seventh.

AN ARITHMETICAL QUESTION.

Four-fourths exceeds three-fourths by one-fourth. That is true; but what fractional part of three-fourths is one-fourth? Clearly one-third, which is the correct answer.

THE DOCTOR'S QUERY.

The mixture of spirits of wine and water is in the proportion of 40 to 1, just as in the other bottle it was in the proportion of 1 to 40.

THE NEW PARTNER.

We must take it for granted that the sum Rogers paid, £2,500, was one-third of the value of the business, which was consequently worth £7,500 before he entered. Smugg's interest in the business had therefore been £4,500 (one and a half times as much as Williamson's), and Williamson's £3,000. As each is now to have an equal interest, Smugg should receive £2,000 of Rogers's contribution, and Williamson should receive £500.

ELEMENTARY ARITHMETIC.

The number that can be divided by every other number without a remainder is the product obtained by multiplying together all numbers!

THE NINE ALMONDS.

This puzzle can be solved in as few as five moves, as follows: Jump 5 over 6, 3, 1, and 7; 2 over 4; 9 over 8; 2 over 9; and 5 over 2. Every move is thus a leaping move.

A WEIGHING PUZZLE.

The twenty ounces might have been weighed into ten two-ounce packets in as few as nine weighing operations, as follows: (1) With the 5oz. and 9oz. weights in different pans, weigh 4oz. (2) With 4oz. weigh second 4oz. (3) Weigh third 4oz. (4) Weigh fourth 4oz., and the remainder will be also 4oz. (5), (6), (7), (8), (9) Divide each portion of 4oz. in turn equally on the two sides of the scales.

A FASCINATING PUZZLE-GAME.

With twenty-seven matches, drawing 1, 2, 3, or 4 at a time, the first player should always win. He must take either 3 or 4 on his first play, and afterwards contrive (which he can always do) that when he holds odd he leaves a multiple of 6 or one more than a multiple of 6; and when he holds even he leaves one less than a multiple of 6. This applies to any number of matches that is three more than a multiple of 6, such as 27. He may also win by the same rule if the number of matches is one more than a multiple of 6, only in such cases he must take 1 or 2 at his first play. If the number of matches be one less than a multiple of 6 (as in the case of 23), the second player can always win, as he can adopt that line of play, from which his opponent is now excluded.

AN IMMORTAL CHESS PROBLEM.

Solutions to Nos. 1 to 6 as already given.

7.—1. R—B 5, or 6, or R—Q 5 or 6.

8.—1. K R—K 6 (ch)

9.—1. K—K 6

10.—1. K R—K 6 (ch)

11.—1. R—B 5

12.—1. R—K Kt 6

13. 1. K Q 2

14.—1. R Q 8

15.—1. R—Q 7

16.—1. K R—R 4 (ch)

17.—1. R—K B 1

18.—1. Q R—Kt 5 (ch)

19.—1. Q R—Kt 5 (ch)

20.—1. R—B 4

21.—1. R—B 4

22.—1. R—R 7

23.—1. R—R 7

24.—1. R—R 7

25.—1. R—R 7

26.—1. R—B 1

27.—1. R—B 8

28.—1. R Q B 1

29.—1. R—K B 5

30.—1. R—Q 8

31.—1. R—Kt 8

32.—1. R—Kt 8

33.—1. R—K R 4

The second move in Nos. 20 and 21 is: Castles after K moves up. In Hallstrom's position either R may play to the fourth square on first move.

BRIDGE PROBLEMS.

The solutions to the two problems are:—

No. 1.

A leads king of diamonds and throws knave of diamonds on it. He then leads a spade and ruffs it. B leads remaining trump. D must play his small club on it, as C must keep the two clubs and the queen of diamonds. A also discards his club. B then leads queen of clubs, and D has to unguard diamonds or throw winning spade. In either case A and B win every trick.

No. 2.

A leads queen of clubs and discards king of diamonds on it; then ten of diamonds, which is covered by knave of diamonds, and ruffs it. B returns two of spades, which A takes with king, and leads out queen of hearts and six of clubs. D must discard a spade or a diamond, and A and B make rest of tricks.

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CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]

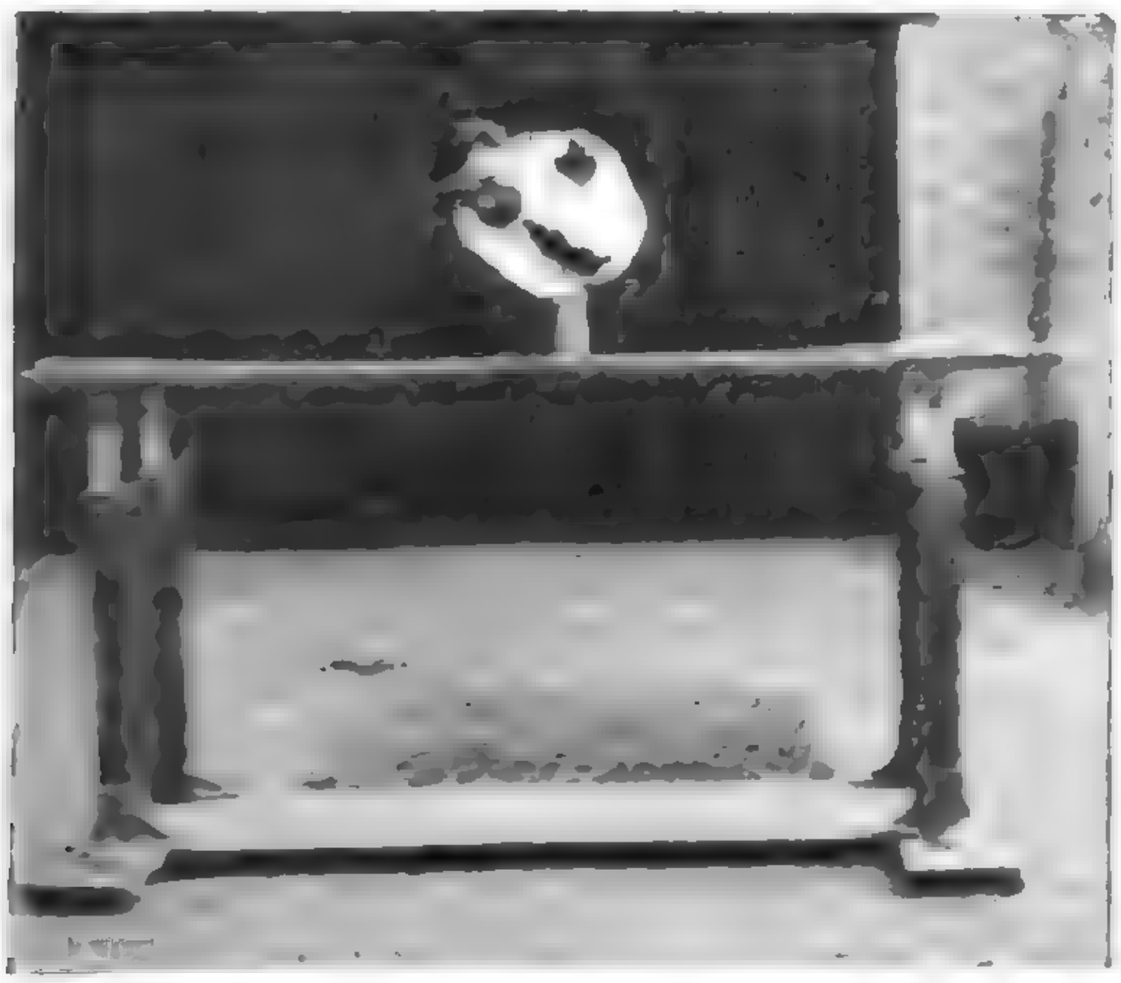


A CURIOSITY FROM A KETTLE.

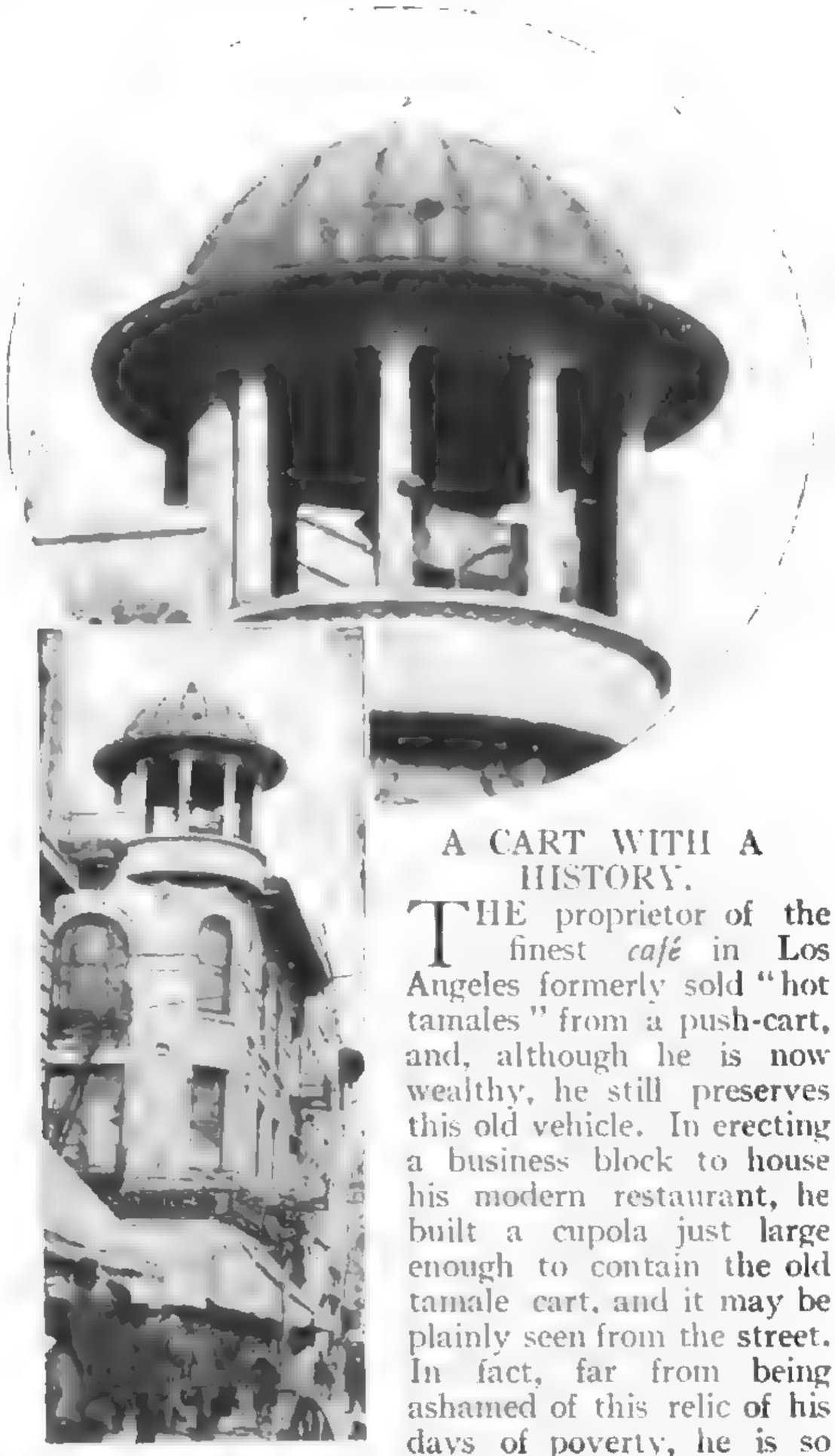
SOME months ago a button of my waistcoat came off, and, bachelor-like, I proceeded to replace it. I stood by the mantelshelf, on which needle and thread were ready, when my attention was suddenly attracted elsewhere. On turning round again I found that needle and thread had mysteriously disappeared. A search failed to trace the missing article, and another was procured. Some time afterwards, during cleaning operations, the object here depicted was removed from the family kettle. On examination it proved to be the lost needle and thread. The whole is coated with fur deposited during boiling operations, and the eye of the needle, besides the tangled thread, is plainly discernible. It seems that as I was turning round the needle and thread were dragged off the mantelpiece and fell into the kettle, with this curious result.—Mr. John T. Sargent, 21, St. James's Road, Hastings.

A CLEVER POSE.

THIS puzzling but cleverly-taken photograph is the work of one of the pupils in a large school in Bexhill. The subject, Professor Stearns, has just planted himself in the horizontal position known as the one-arm balance—a balance exceedingly difficult to retain for any considerable length of time. The



camera was then held in such a position that the feet and legs of the gymnast were entirely obscured by the head and shoulders. The fact that the left arm is extended towards the camera makes it appear of very scanty length. This is also called the "weather vane," if the performer (as in the present case) can turn on his right arm as though on a pivot, thus indicating the different points of the compass.



A CART WITH A HISTORY.

THE proprietor of the finest *café* in Los Angeles formerly sold "hot tamales" from a push-cart, and, although he is now wealthy, he still preserves this old vehicle. In erecting a business block to house his modern restaurant, he built a cupola just large enough to contain the old tamale cart, and it may be plainly seen from the street. In fact, far from being ashamed of this relic of his days of poverty, he is so attached to it that when a fire threatened his establishment he directed the firemen to let the silver and cut glass go until the old cart was safe!—Mr. C. L. Edholm, 4,624, Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, California.

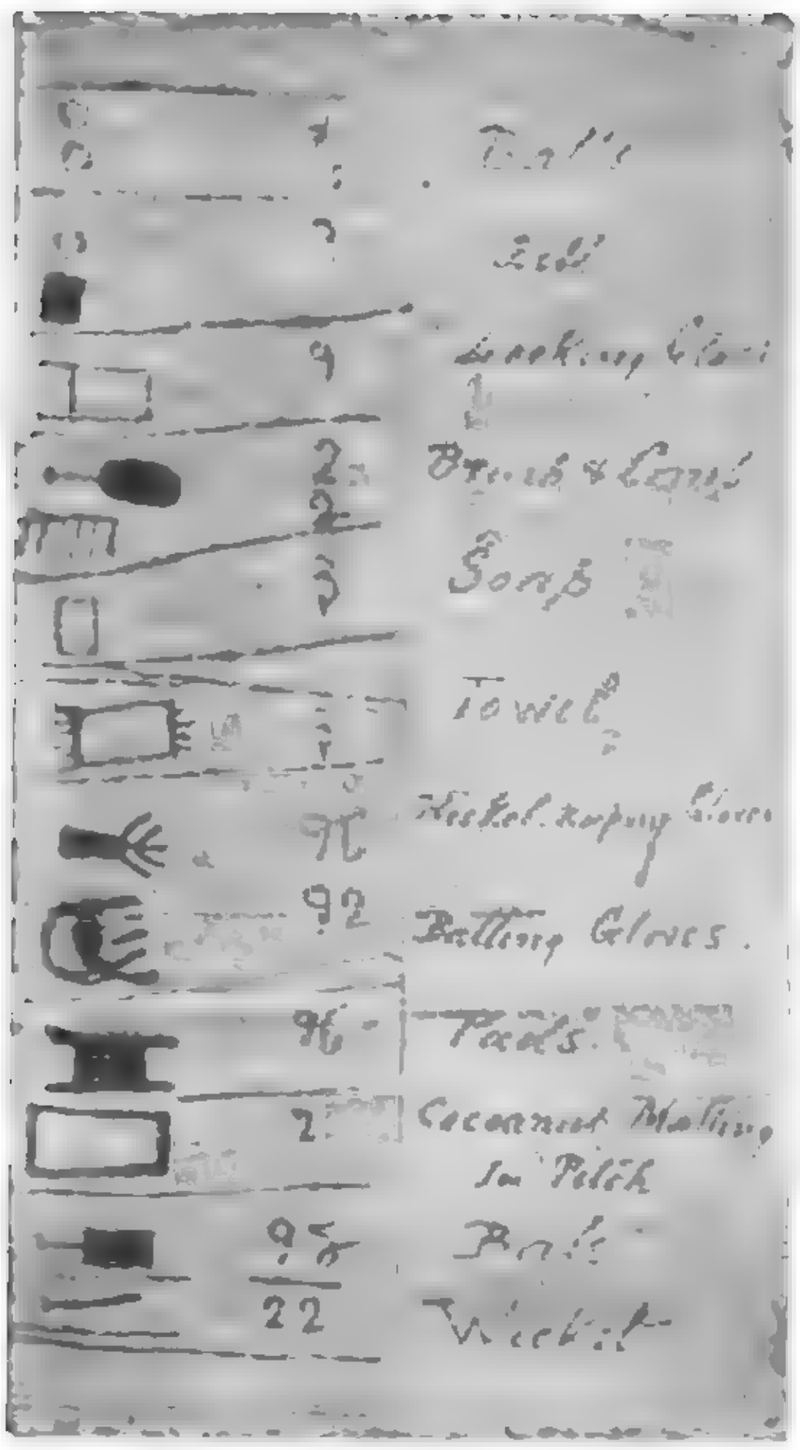
BURNING SMOKE.

TAKE a piece of heavy wrapping paper about the size of a newspaper page and roll it into a long cone, fasten it securely, and cut the point off the cone, leaving an opening about the size of a sixpence. Then set fire to the large end of the cone, holding the pointed end upwards, and with the same match ignite the smoke as it issues from the opening in the small end of the cone. The effect will be that shown in the accompanying photograph.—Mr. W. F. Graper, 485, Eighth Avenue, New York City, U.S.A.



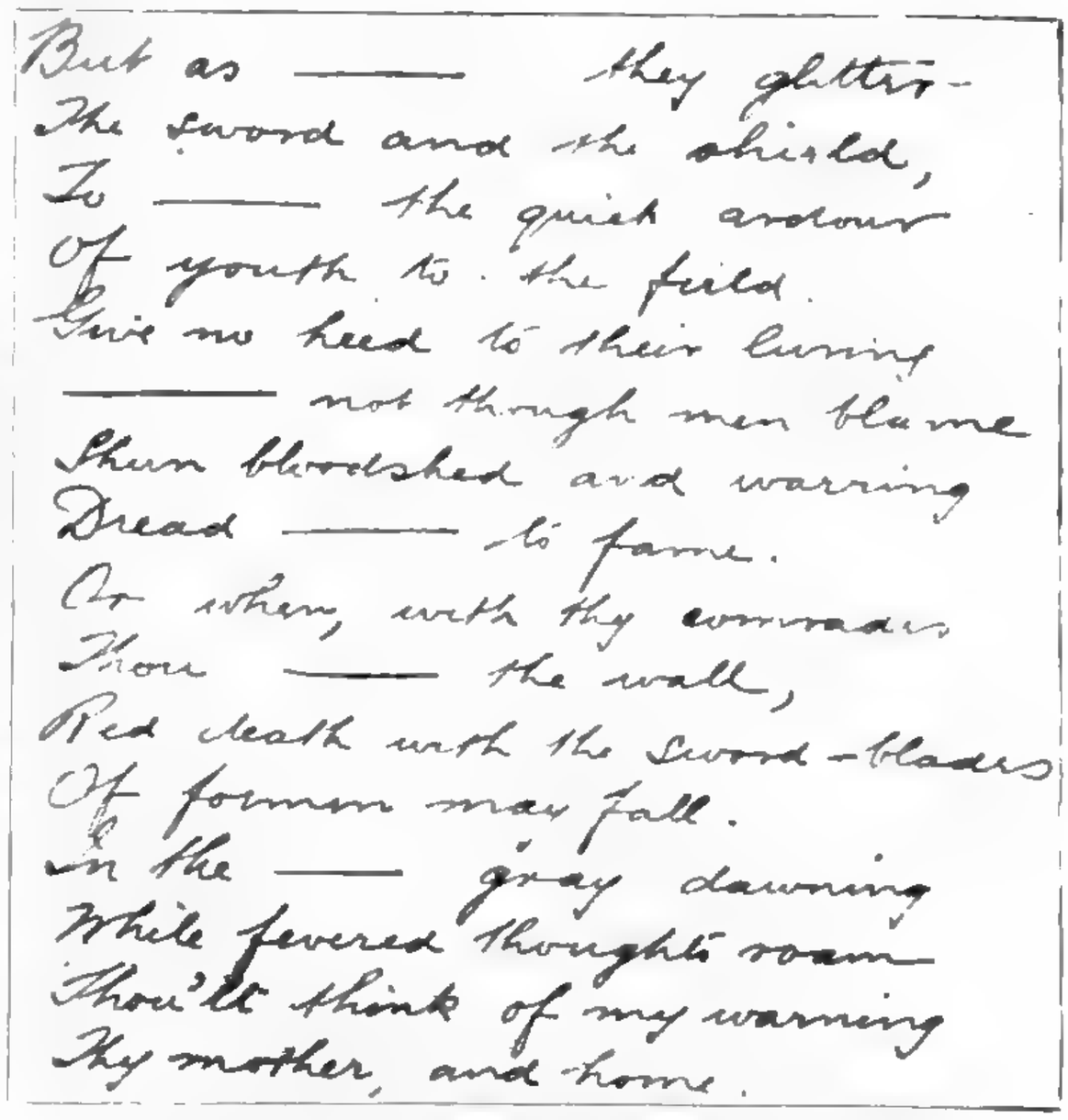
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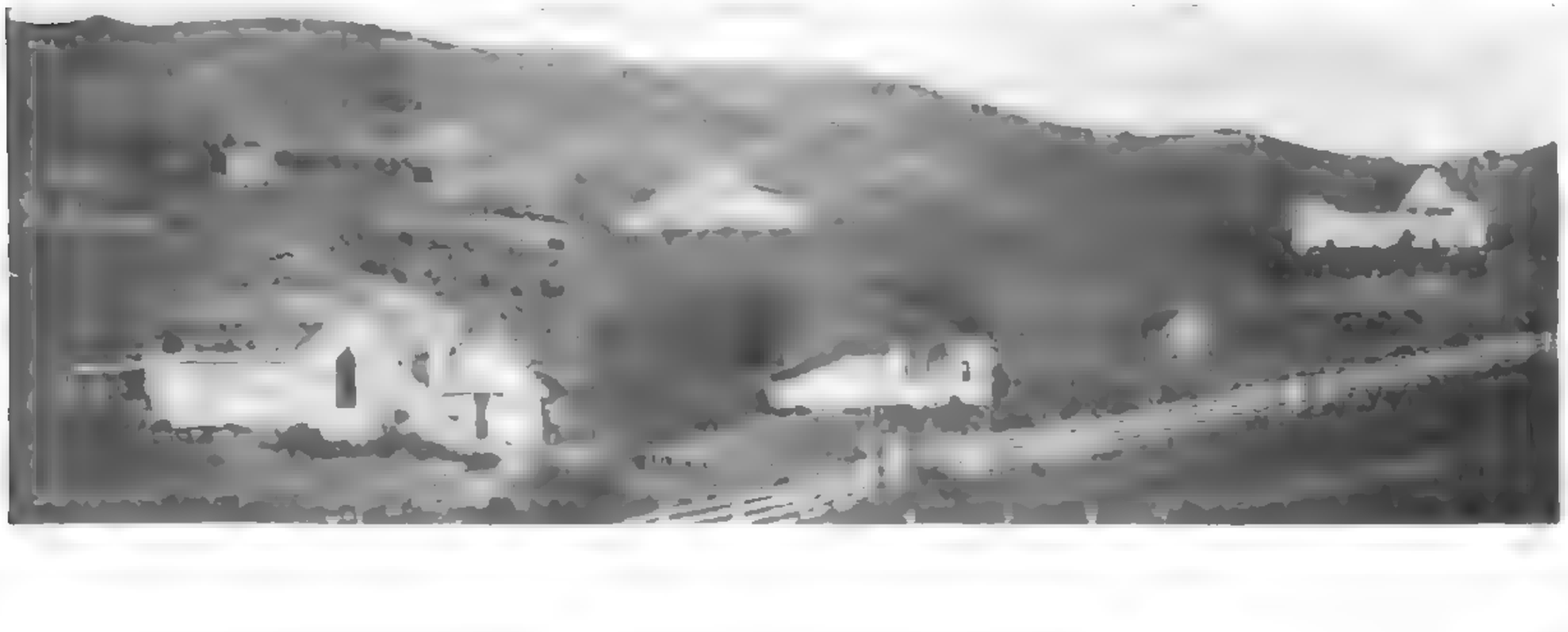
A LIST IN PICTURE-WRITING.

THE list shown in the accompanying illustration was found in the possession of a native "groundman" in charge of the property belonging to the Darjeeling Cricket Club, of which I was once hon. secretary. The man, being unable to read or write, had adopted this quaint method of listing the property in his charge. The illustrations represent the nature of each article, and the figures, which purport to be numerals used in the "Deb Nagri" language, the number of each article. It will be noticed that, although quite illiterate, the man was not without some natural gift as a draughtsman, since he was able to reproduce, though somewhat crudely, the shape of each article in his possession.—Mr. C. E. Gouldsbury, c/o H. S. King and Co., 9, Pall Mall, S.W.


But as —— they glitter-
The sword and the shield,
To —— the quick ardour
Of youth to the field.
Give no heed to their luring
—— not though men blame
Shun bloodshed and warring
Dread —— to fame.
Or when, with thy command,
Thou —— the wall,
Red death with the sword-blades
Of foemen may fall.
In the —— gray dawning
While fevered thoughts roam—
Thou'lt think of my warning
Thy mother, and home.

EVERY ROOM A HOUSE.

PROBABLY nowhere is there so strange a "house" as that lived in by Joaquin Miller, the "Poet of the Sierras." In fact, in this case "house" is a collective noun, for the bard sleeps under one roof, eats and cooks under another, and entertains visitors under still another. Yet the poet insists that it is all one house, with merely a pleasant walk in the sunshine between the rooms. The poet's home is at Dimond, California, in the foothills at the back of Berkeley and Oakland. From the photograph it might appear that an entire village clusters on this hillside, but, as a matter of fact, the poet is the only occupant of these houses, or "rooms." He is much visited by lovers of his poetry, however, and the "guest room" is generally crowded. In this room he has a museum of relics, and he shows with grim pride a piece of one of his own ears, which was frozen off in Alaska.—Mr. Aubrey Drury, 1,912, Virginia Street, Berkeley, California, U.S.A.



WHAT IS THE MISSING WORD?

SOME while ago your "Curiosities" page contained a verse in which half-a-dozen words were left blank, each of these words being composed of the same six letters. This suggested to me another verse on the same lines, which I think your readers will find interesting and not too difficult of solution.—Mr. A. Salter, Æolia, 44, The Avenue, Muswell Hill, N.



CEMENT AND SENTIMENT.

A HOME-BUILDER in California hit upon a charming idea when he caused his little son to make the impression of his hands in the wet cement of the walk before his door Although the imprint was made in 1887, the outlines of the little hands are perfectly clear, and will remain as a dainty souvenir of the boy's play days. It is just such touches of sentiment as this that make the difference between a house and a home.—Mr. C. L. Edholm, 4,624, Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, California.

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"HE STRETCHED OUT HIS ARMS TO CLASP HER, AND LO, SHE WAS GONE!"

(*See Page* 131.)

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Smith and the Pharaohs.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

Illustrated by Alec Ball.

SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST TWO INSTALMENTS.

Wandering one day among the Egyptian sculptures in the British Museum, Smith falls in love with the plaster cast of an unknown woman's head, which seems to him to return his gaze with a mysterious smile. As a result, he becomes an ardent Egyptologist, and spends his holidays in excavation work in Egypt. On his third visit he finds in a tomb the head of a statuette, whose smiling features he immediately recognizes as those of the cast in the Museum, and whose name he discovers from the hieroglyphics is Queen Ma-Mee. Realizing that he is in her desecrated tomb, he renews his search, and finds, among other things, a mummied hand bearing two gold rings.

Smith takes his discoveries to the Cairo Museum, and is allowed to retain the statuette, the mummied hand, and one of the rings. After leaving the Director he wanders through the Museum, and, forgetful of time, at length finds himself locked in among the mummies of the kings and queens of Egypt. Realizing the impossibility of making his way out, Smith settles himself comfortably for the night. As soon as he has done so, however, he becomes aware that a great gathering of Egyptian kings and queens—among whom he recognizes the original of his statuette—has taken place, and he becomes greatly interested in their conversation.

PART II.—(*continued*).

SILENCE fell upon that glittering galaxy of kings and queens and upon all the hundreds of their offspring, their women, and their great officers who crowded the double tier of galleries around the hall.

"Royalties of Egypt," she began, in a sweet, clear voice which penetrated to the farthest recesses of the place, "I, Cleopatra, the sixth of that name and the last monarch who ruled over the Upper and the Lower Lands before Egypt became a home of slaves, have a word to say to your Majesties, who, in your mortal days, all of you more worthily filled the throne on which once I sat. I do not speak of Egypt and its fate, or of our sins—whereof mine were not the least—that brought her to the dust. Those sins I and others expiate elsewhere, and of them, from age to age, we hear enough. But on this one night of the year, that of the feast of him whom we call Osiris, but whom other nations have known and know by different names, it is given to us once more to be mortal for an hour, and, though we be but shadows, to renew the loves and hates of our long-perished flesh. Here for an hour we strut in our forgotten pomp; the gems that were ours still adorn our brows, and once more we seem to listen to our people's praise. Our hopes are the hopes of mortal life, our foes are the foes we feared, our gods grow real again, and our lovers whisper in our ears. Moreover, this joy is given to us—to see each other as we are, to know as the gods know, and therefore to forgive, even where we despise and hate. Now I have done, and I, the youngest of the rulers of ancient Egypt, call upon him who was the first of her kings to take my place."

She bowed, and the audience bowed back to her. Then she descended the steps and was lost in the throng. Where she had been appeared an old man, simply-clad, long-bearded, wise-faced, and wearing on his grey hair no crown save a plain band of gold, from the centre of which rose the snake-headed *uræus* crest.

"Your Majesties who came after me," said the old man, "I am Menes, the first of the accepted Pharaohs of Egypt, although many of those who went before me were more truly kings than I. Yet as the first who joined the Upper and the Lower Lands, and took the royal style and titles, and ruled as well as I could rule, it is given to me to talk with you for a while this night whereon our spirits are permitted to gather from the uttermost parts of the uttermost worlds and see each other

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face to face. First, in darkness and in secret, let us speak of the mystery of the gods and of its meanings. Next, in darkness and in secret, let us speak of the mys- -y of our lives, of whence they come, of where they tarry by the road, and whither they go at last. And afterwards, let us speak of other matters face to face in light and openness, as we were wont to do when we were men. Then hence to Thebes, there to celebrate our yearly festival. Is such your will?"

"Such is our will," they answered.

It seemed to Smith that dense darkness fell upon the place, and with it a silence that was awful. For a time that he could not reckon, that might have been years or might have been moments, he sat there in the utter darkness and the utter silence.

At length the light came again, first as a blue spark, then in upward pouring rays, and lastly pervading all. There stood Menes on the steps, and there in front of him was gathered the same royal throng.

"The mysteries are finished," said the old king. "Now, if any have aught to say, let it be said openly."

A young man dressed in the robes and ornaments of an early dynasty came forward and stood upon the steps between the Pharaoh Menes and all those who had reigned after him. His face seemed familiar to Smith, as was the side lock that hung down behind his right ear in token of his youth. Where had he seen him? Ah, he remembered. Only a few hours ago lying in one of the cases of the Museum, together with the bones of the Pharaoh Unas.

"Your Majesties," he began, "I am the King Metesuphis. The matter that I wish to lay before you is that of the violation of our sepulchres by those men who now live upon the earth. The mortal bodies of many who are gathered here to-night lie in this place to be stared at and mocked by the curious. I myself am one of them, jawless, broken, hideous to behold. Yonder, day by day, must my *Ka* sit watching my desecrated flesh, torn from the pyramid that, with cost and labour, I raised up to be an eternal house wherein I might hide till the hour of resurrection. Others of us lie in far lands. Thus, as he can tell you, my predecessor, Men-kau-ra, he who built the third of the great pyramids, the Pyramid of Her, sleeps, or rather wakes, in a dark city called London across the seas, a place of murk where no sun shines. Others have been burnt with fire, others are scattered in small dust. The ornaments that were ours are stolen away and sold to the greedy; our sacred writings and our symbols are their jest. Soon there will not be one holy grave in Egypt that remains undefiled."

"That is so," said a voice from the company. "But four months gone the deep, deep pit was opened that I had dug in the shadow of the Pyramid of Cephren who begat me in the world. There in my chamber I slept alone, two handfuls of white bones, since when I died we did not preserve the body with wrappings and with spices. Now I see those bones of mine, beside which my double has watched for these five thousand years, hid in the blackness of a great ship and tossing on a sea that is strewn with ice."

"It is so," echoed a hundred other voices.

"Then," went on the young king, turning to Menes, "I ask of your Majesty whether there is no means whereby we may be avenged on those who do us this foul wrong."

"Let him who has wisdom speak," said the old Pharaoh.

A man of middle age, short in stature and of a thoughtful brow, who held in his hand a wand and wore the feathers and insignia of the heir to the throne of Egypt and of a high priest of Amen, moved to the steps. Smith knew him at once from his statues. He was Khaemuas, son of Rameses the Great, the mightiest magician that ever was in Egypt, who of his own will withdrew himself from earth before the time came that he should sit upon the throne.

"I have wisdom, your Majesties, and I will answer," he said. "The time draws on when, in the land of Death which is Life, the land that we call Amenti, it will be given to us to lay our wrongs as to this matter before Those who judge, knowing that they will be avenged. On this night of the year also, when we resume the shapes we wore, we have certain powers of vengeance, or rather of executing justice. But our time is short, and there is much to say and do before the sun god Ra arises and we depart each to his place. Therefore it seems best that we should leave these wicked ones in their wickedness till we meet them face to face beyond the world."

Smith, who had been following the words of Khaemuas with the closest attention and considerable anxiety, breathed again, thanking Heaven that the engagements of these departed monarchs were so numerous and pressing. Still, as a matter of precaution, he drew the cigar-box which contained Ma-Mee's hand from his pocket, and pushed it as far

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away from him as he could. It was a most unlucky act. Perhaps the cigar-box grated on the floor, or perhaps the fact of his touching the relic put him into psychic communication with all these spirits. At any rate, he became aware that the eyes of that dreadful magician were fixed upon him, and that a bone had a better chance of escaping the search of a Röntgen ray than he of hiding himself from their baleful glare.

"As it happens, however," went on Khaemuas, in a cold voice, "I now perceive that there is hidden in this place, and spying on us, one of the worst of these vile thieves. I say to your Majesties that I see him crouched beneath yonder funeral barge, and that he has with him at this moment the hand of one of your Majesties, stolen by him from her tomb at Thebes."

Now every queen in the company became visibly agitated (Smith, who was watching Ma-Mee, saw her hold up her hands and look at them), while all the Pharaohs pointed with their fingers and exclaimed together, in a voice that rolled round the hall like thunder:—

"Let him be brought forth to judgment!"

Khaemuas raised his wand and, holding it towards the boat where Smith was hidden, said:—

"Draw near, Vile One, bringing with thee that thou hast stolen."

Smith tried hard to remain where he was. He sat himself down and set his heels against the ground. As the reader knows, he was always shy and retiring by disposition, and never had these weaknesses oppressed him more than they did just then. When a child his favourite nightmare had been that the foreman of a jury was in the act of proclaiming him guilty of some dreadful but unstated crime. Now he understood what that nightmare foreshadowed. He was about to be convicted in a court of which all the kings and queens of Egypt were the jury, Menes was Chief Justice, and the magician Khaemuas played the *rôle* of Attorney-General.

In vain did he sit down and hold fast. Some power took possession of him which forced him first to stretch out his arm and pick up the cigar-box containing the hand of Ma-Mee, and next drew him from the friendly shelter of the deal boards that were about the boat.

Now he was on his feet and walking down the flight of steps opposite to those on which Menes stood far away. Now he was among all that throng of ghosts, which parted to let him pass, looking at him as he went with cold and wondering eyes. They were very majestic ghosts; the ages that had gone by since they laid down their sceptres had taken nothing from their royal dignity. Moreover, save one, none of them seemed to have any pity for his plight. She was a little princess who stood by her mother. As he passed Smith heard her say: "This Vile One is frightened. Be brave, Vile One!"

Smith understood, and pride came to his aid. He, a gentleman of the modern world, would not show the white feather before a crowd of ancient Egyptian ghosts. Turning to the child, he smiled at her, then drew himself to his full height and walked on quietly. Here it may be stated that Smith was a tall man, still comparatively young, and very good-looking, straight and spare in frame, with dark, pleasant eyes and a little black beard.

"At least he is a well-favoured thief," said one of the queens to another.

"Yes," answered she who had been addressed. "I wonder that a man with such a noble air should find pleasure in disturbing graves and stealing the offerings of the dead," words that gave Smith much cause for thought. He had never considered the matter in this light.

Now he came to the place where Ma-Mee stood, the black-browed Pharaoh who had been her husband at her side. On his left hand, which held the cigar-box, was the gold Bes ring, and that box he felt constrained to carry pressed against him just over his heart.

As he went by he turned his head, and his eyes met those of Ma-Mee. She started violently. Then she saw the ring upon his hand and again started, still more violently.

"What ails your Majesty?" asked the Pharaoh.

"Oh, naught," she answered. "Yet does this earth-dweller remind you of anyone?"

"Yes, he does," answered the Pharaoh. "He reminds me very much of that accursed sculptor about whom we had words."

"Do you mean a certain Horu, the Court artist; he who worked the image that was buried with me, and whom you sent to carve your statues in the deserts of Kush, until he died of fever—or was it poison?"

"Aye; Horu and no other, may Set take and keep him!" growled the Pharaoh.

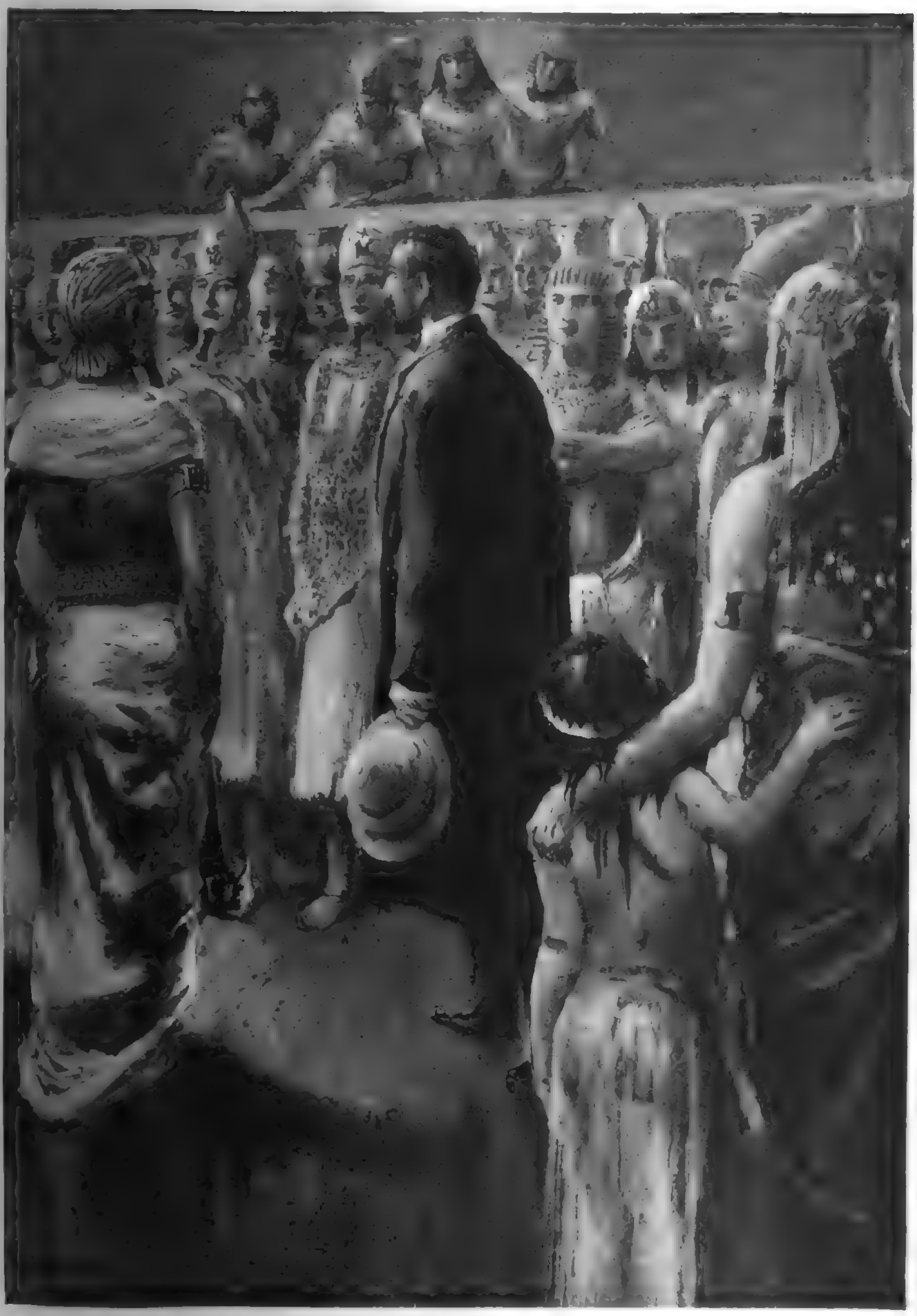
Then Smith passed on and heard no more. Now he stood before the venerable Menes. Some instinct caused him to bow to this Pharaoh, who bowed back to him. Then he turned and bowed to the royal company, and they also bowed back to him, coldly, but very gravely and courteously.

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"NOW HE WAS AMONG ALL THAT THRONG OF GHOSTS, WHICH PARTED TO LET HIM

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PASS, LOOKING AT HIM AS HE WENT WITH COLD AND WONDERING EYES."

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"Dweller on the world where once we had our place, and therefore brother of us, the dead," began Menes, "this divine priest and magician"—and he pointed to Khaemuas—"declares that you are one of those who foully violate our sepulchres and desecrate our ashes. He declares, moreover, that at this very moment you have with you a portion of the mortal flesh of a certain Majesty whose spirit is present here. Say, now, are these things true?"

To his astonishment Smith found that he had not the slightest difficulty in answering in the same sweet tongue.

"O King, they are true and not true. Hear me, rulers of Egypt. It is true that I have searched in your graves, because my heart has been drawn towards you, and I would learn all that I could concerning you, for it comes to me *now* that once I was one of you—no king, indeed, yet perchance of the blood of kings. Also—for I would hide nothing even if I could—I searched for one tomb above all others."

"Why, O man?" asked the Judge.

"Because a face drew me, a face that was cut in stone."

Now all that great audience turned their eyes towards him and listened as though his words moved them.

"Did you find that holy tomb?" asked Menes. "If so, what did you find therein?"

"Aye, Pharaoh, and in it I found these," and he took from the box the withered hand, from his pocket the broken bronze, and from his finger the ring.

"Also I found other things which I delivered to the keeper of this place, articles of jewellery that I seem to see to-night upon one who is present here among you."

"Is the face of this figure the face you sought?" asked the Judge.

"It is the face," he answered.

Menes took the effigy in his hand and read the cartouche that was engraved beneath its breast.

"If there be here among us," he said, presently, "one who long after my day ruled as Queen in Egypt, one who was named Ma-Mé, let her draw near."

Now from where she stood glided Ma-Mee and took her place opposite to Smith.

"Say, O Queen," asked Menes, "do you know aught of this matter?"

"I know that hand; it was my own hand," she answered. "I know that ring; it was my ring. I know that image in bronze; it was my image. Look on me and judge for yourselves whether this be so. A certain sculptor fashioned it, the son of a king's son, who was named Horu, the first of sculptors and the head artist of my Court. There, clad in strange garments, he stands before you. Horu, or the double of Horu, he who cut the image when I ruled in Egypt, is he who found the image and the man who stands before you; or, mayhap, his double cast in the same mould."

The Pharaoh Menes turned to the magician Khaemuas and said:—

"Are these things so, O Seer?"

"They are so," answered Khaemuas. "This dweller on the earth is he who, long ago, was the sculptor Horu. But what shall that avail? He, once more a living man, is a violator of the hallowed dead. I say, therefore, that judgment should be executed on his flesh, so that when the light comes here to-morrow he himself will again be gathered to the dead."

Menes bent his head upon his breast and pondered. Smith said nothing. To him the whole play was so curious that he had no wish to interfere with its development. If these ghosts wished to make him of their number, let them do so. He had no ties on earth, and now when he knew full surely that there was a life beyond this of earth he was quite prepared to explore its mysteries. So he folded his arms upon his breast and awaited the sentence.

But Ma-Mee did not wait. She raised her hand so swiftly that the bracelets jingled on her wrists, and spoke out with boldness.

"Royal Khaemuas, prince and magician," she said, "hearken to one who, like you, was Egypt's heir centuries before you were born, one also who ruled over the Two Lands, and not so ill—which, Prince, never was your lot. Answer me! Is all wisdom centred in your breast? Answer me! Do you alone know the mysteries of Life and Death? Answer me! Did your god Amen teach you that vengeance went before mercy? Answer me! Did he teach you that men should be judged unheard? That they should be hurried by violence to Osiris ere their time, and thereby separated from the dead ones whom they loved and forced to return to live again upon this evil Earth?

"Listen: when the last moon was near her full my spirit sat in my tomb in the burying-place of queens. My spirit saw this man enter into my tomb, and what did he there? With bowed head he looked upon my bones that a thief of the priesthood of Amen had robbed and burnt within twenty years of their

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burial, in which he himself had taken part. And what did this man with those bones, he who was once Horu? I tell you that he hid them away there in the tomb where he thought they could not be found again. Who, then, was the thief and the violator? He who robbed and burnt my bones, or he who buried them with reverence? Again, he found the jewels that the priest of your brotherhood had dropped in his flight, when the smoke of the burning flesh and spices overpowered him, and with them the hand which that wicked one had broken off from the body of my Majesty. What did he then? He took the jewels. Would you have had him leave them to be stolen by some peasant? And the hand? I tell you that he kissed that poor dead hand which once had been part of the body of my Majesty, and that now he treasures it as a holy relic. My spirit saw him do these things and made report thereof to me. I ask you therefore, Prince, I ask you all, Royalties of Egypt, whether for such deeds this man should die?"



"I ASK YOU, PRINCE, I ASK YOU ALL, ROYALTIES OF EGYPT, WHETHER FOR SUCH DEEDS THIS MAN SHOULD DIE?"

Now Khaemuas, the advocate of vengeance, shrugged his shoulders and smiled meaningly, but the congregation of kings and queens thundered an answer, and it was: "*No!*"

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Ma-Mee looked to Menes to give judgment. Before he could speak the dark-browed Pharaoh who had named her wife strode forward and addressed them.

"Her Majesty, Heiress of Egypt, Royal Wife, Lady of the Two Lands, has spoken," he cried. "Now let me speak who was the husband of her Majesty. Whether this man was once Horu the sculptor I know not. If so he was also an evil-doer who, by my decree, died in banishment in the land of Kush. Whatever be the truth as to that matter, he admits that he violated the tomb of her Majesty and stole what the old thieves had left. Her Majesty says also—and he does not deny it—that he dared to kiss her hand, and for a man to kiss the hand of a wedded Queen of Egypt the punishment is death. I claim that this man should die to the World before his time, that in a day to come, again he may live and suffer in the World. Judge, O Menes."

Menes lifted his head and spoke, saying :—

"Repeat to me the law, O Pharaoh, under which a living man must die for the kissing of a dead hand. In my day and in that of those who went before me there was no such law in Egypt. If a living man, who was not her husband, or of her kin, kissed the living hand of a wedded Queen of Egypt save in ceremony, then perchance he might be called upon to die. Perchance for such a reason a certain Horu once was called upon to die. But in the grave there is no marriage, and therefore, even if he had found her alive within the tomb and kissed her hand, or even her lips, why should he die for the crime of love?

"Hear me, all; this is my judgment in the matter. Let the soul of that priest who first violated the tomb of the royal Ma-Mee be hunted down and given to the jaws of the Destroyer, that he may know the last depths of Death, if so the gods declare. But let this man go from among us unharmed, since what he did he did in reverent ignorance and because Hathor, Goddess of Love, guided him from of old. Love rules this world wherein we meet to-night with all the worlds whence we have gathered or whither we still must go. Who can defy its power? Who can refuse its rites? Now hence to Thebes!"

There was a rushing sound as of a thousand wings, and all were gone.

No, not all, since Smith yet stood before the draped colossi and the empty steps, and beside him, glorious, unearthly, gleamed the vision of Ma-Mee.

"I, too, must away," she whispered; "yet ere I go a word with you who once were a sculptor in Egypt. You loved me then, and that love cost you your life, you who once dared to kiss this hand of mine that again you kissed in yonder tomb. For I was Pharaoh's wife, in name only, understand me well, in name only, since that title of Royal Mother which they gave me is but a graven lie. Horu, I never was a wife, and when you died, swiftly I followed you to the grave. Oh, you forget, but I remember! I remember many things. You think that the priestly thief broke this figure of me which you found in the sand outside my tomb. Not so. *I* broke it, because, daring greatly, you had written thereon, 'Beloved,' not 'of *Horus* the God,' as you should have done, but 'of *Horu* the Man.' So when I came to be buried, Pharaoh, knowing all, took the image from my wrappings and hurled it away. I remember, too, the casting of that image, and how you threw a gold chain I had given to you into the crucible with the bronze, saying that gold alone was fit to fashion me. And this signet that I bear—it was you who cut it. Take it, take it, Horu, and in its place give me back that which is on your hand, the Bes ring that I also wore. Take it and wear it ever till you die again, and let it go to the grave with you as once it went to the grave with me.

"Now hearken. When the great sun arises and you awake you will think that you have dreamed a dream. You will think that in that dream you saw and spoke with a lady of Egypt who died more than three thousand years ago, but whose beauty, carved in stone and bronze, has touched your heart to-day. So let it be, yet know, O man, who once were named Horu, that such dreams are ofttimes a shadow of the truth. Know that this Glory which shines before you is mine indeed in the land that is both far and near, the land wherein I dwell eternally, and that what is mine has been, is, and shall be yours for ever. Gods may change their kingdoms and their names; men may live and die, and live again once more to die; empires may fall and those who ruled them be turned to forgotten dust. Yet true love endures immortal as the souls in which it was conceived, and from it for you and me, the night of woe and separation done, at the daybreak which draws on, there shall be born the splendour and the peace of perfect union. Till that hour foredoomed seek me no more, though I be ever near you, as I have ever been. Till that most blessed hour, Horu, farewell."

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She bent towards him; the perfume from her breath and hair beat upon him; the light of her wondrous eyes searched out his very soul, reading the answer that was written there.

He stretched out his arms to clasp her, and lo, she was gone!

It was a very cold and a very stiff Smith who awoke on the following morning, to find himself exactly where he had lain down—namely, on a cement floor beneath the keel of a funeral boat in the central hall of the Cairo Museum. He crept from his shelter shivering, and looked at this hall to find it quite as empty as it had been on the previous evening. Not a sign or a token was there of Pharaoh Menes and all those kings and queens of whom he had dreamed so vividly.

Reflecting on the strange phantasies that weariness and excited nerves can summon to the mind in sleep, Smith made his way to the great doors and waited in the shadow, praying earnestly that, although it was the Mohammedan Sabbath, someone might visit the Museum to see that all was well.

As a matter of fact, someone did, and before he had been there a minute—a watchman going about his business. He unlocked the place carelessly, looking over his shoulder at a kite fighting with two nesting crows. In an instant Smith, who was not minded to stop and answer questions, had slipped past him and was gliding down the portico, from monument to monument, like a snake between boulders, still keeping in the shadow as he headed for the gates.

The attendant caught sight of him and uttered a yell of fear; then, since it is not good to look upon an *afreet*, appearing from whence no mortal man could be, he turned his head away. When he looked again Smith was through those gates and had mingled with the crowd in the street beyond.

The sunshine was very pleasant to one who was conscious of having contracted a chill of the worst Egyptian order from long contact with a damp stone floor. Smith walked on through it towards his hotel—it was Shepheard's, and more than a mile away—making up a story as he went to tell the hall-porter of how he had gone to dine at Mena House by the Pyramids, missed the last tram, and stopped the night there.

Whilst he was thus engaged his left hand struck somewhat sharply against the corner of the cigar-box in his pocket, that which contained the relic of the queen Ma-Mee. The pain caused him to glance at his fingers to see if they were injured, and to perceive on one of them the ring he wore. Surely, surely it was not the same that the Director-General had given him! *That* ring was engraved with the image of the god Bes. On *this* was cut the cartouche of her Majesty Ma-Mee! And he had dreamed—oh, he had dreamed——!

To this day Smith is wondering whether, in the hurry of the moment, he made a mistake as to which of those rings the Director-General had given him as part of his share of the spoil of the royal tomb he discovered in the Valley of Queens. Afterwards Smith wrote to ask, but the Director-General could only remember that he gave him one of the two rings, and assured him that that inscribed "Bes Ank, Ank Bes," was with Ma-Mee's other jewels in the Gold Room of the Museum.

Also Smith is wondering whether any other bronze figure of an old Egyptian royalty shows so high a percentage of gold as, on analysis, the broken image of Ma-Mee was proved to do. For had she not seemed to tell him a tale of the melting of a golden chain when that effigy was cast?

Was it all only a dream, or was it—something more—by day and by night he asks of Nothingness?

But, be she near or far, no answer comes from the Queen Ma-Mee, whose proud titles were "Her Majesty the Good God, the justified Dweller in Osiris; Daughter of Amen, Royal Heiress, Royal Sister, Royal Wife, Royal Mother; Lady of the Two Lands; Wearer of the Double Crown; of the White Crown, of the Red Crown; Sweet Flower of Love, Beautiful Eternally."

So, like the rest of us, Smith must wait to learn the truth concerning many things, and more particularly as to which of those two circles of ancient gold the Director-General gave him yonder at Cairo.

It seems but a little matter, yet it is more than all the worlds to him!

To the astonishment of his colleagues in antiquarian research, Smith has never returned to Egypt. He explains to them that his health is quite restored, and that he no longer needs this annual change to a more temperate clime.

Now, *which* of the two royal rings did the Director-General return to Smith on the finger of her late Majesty Ma-Mee?

THE END.

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IN QUEST OF QUIET.

By JOHN IVIMEY.

Illustrated by Bert Thomas.

[This is in every detail a true story, and will excite the sympathy of others who have sought quiet and not found it.]

SOME little time ago, in the month of November, I received a commission for a musical composition, which was to be ready by Christmas. As absolute quiet is essential for rapid work, and I lived in rather a noisy flat in London, I resolved to go down to a little-known seaside place, which I will call Shrimpington, where I could write undisturbed.

I happened to have a friend who was the postmaster there. When I say "friend," he was not exactly that; he was an amateur vocalist whom I had met at a choral society I used to conduct.

He was a little, red-faced man named Bullet, with a high and penetrating voice tinged with adenoids (sometimes called a tenor). He attracted my attention when we were rehearsing "The Wreck of the *Hesperus*," because he always grinned at the man on his left when they came to the words, "the billows frothed like yeast." On my asking him why he did this, he told me that the man next to him was a baker by trade! It seemed a new form of humour, and we became friendly. When he left London he gave me his card, and begged me to give him a call if I ever came his way. So when I arrived at Shrimpington I at once sought my friend at the post-office.

The little man was delighted to see me, and upon learning the reason for my sudden appearance pressed me to stay with him. Much as I respected him, I courteously but firmly declined. I had come to work, and the "divine afflatus" might descend upon me at any moment. Now, your amateur vocalist fills up all his spare time with singing. In moments of inspiration, when music and ink were flowing from my fountain-pen, this man might burst forth into "The Anchor's Weigh'd" or "Annie Laurie"; then my springs of melody would dry up. This kind of man sings himself to bed, and sings when he gets up! He will certainly sing in his bath. These keen amateur vocalists warble subconsciously; they don't know when they're doing it. So I firmly but courteously (as I have said) declined to accept the hospitality.



"HE ALWAYS GRINNED AT THE MAN ON HIS LEFT WHEN THEY CAME TO THE WORDS, 'THE BILLOWS FROTHED LIKE YEAST.'"

Shrimpington possessed only two hotels —the Belle Vue on the Esplanade and the Station Hotel. As the first was closed during the winter months, I went to the Station Hotel. It was a trifle forbidding at first sight, and I was apprehensive about the trains.

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"Is there any shunting during the night?" I asked the landlord.

"Hardly any, sir," he replied; "at least, not enough to disturb anyone. You'll find the place as quiet as mice."

I felt a little dubious, and said I would try it for one night, and, if I liked it, might stay a week or so. At this the landlord's face lit up; I supposed he did not get many visitors in November. Having asked for a table to be placed in my room for the purposes of my work and ordered a fire—for it was very cold—I ate a light supper and had a look round the hotel. The coffee-room, where I had supped, was a fairly large, dingy sort of room. On the table stood several coloured wine-glasses with a serviette in each, keeping guard over a cheap-looking epergne containing imitation flowers. The table-cloth had seen better days.

Half-a-dozen mahogany chairs with seats of horsehair, a rickety sideboard, a few oleographs in dingy gilt frames, and a large Hearts of Oak certificate on the walls completed the *ensemble*. There was a bar with a bagatelle-board in it, at which some three or four of the Shrimpington ratepayers were amusing themselves. My bedroom was on the first floor, with an outlook on to the coal-yard.

There was nothing more of interest, so I unpacked my bag and arranged my writing materials on the table ready for the morning. Then I took a brisk walk along the sea-front, past the Belle Vue—a gloomy place—exchanged a few words with a coastguard, who regarded me with evident astonishment, as if wondering what could possibly bring me to Shrimpington in November, returned to the hotel, and went to bed.

I was tired after my journey, and needed sleep; but I am accustomed to a fairly soft bed, and this one was like a board. It was the hardest and most unyielding bed it has ever been my lot to lie upon. The bed-clothes, too, were scanty and had no margin for tucking in, and there was a decidedly clammy feeling about the sheets which made me nervous. I got out of bed and applied the looking-glass test to see if they were damp, but as the glass did not blur I concluded they were all right. (I learnt afterwards that I should have warmed the glass.)

Getting back to bed—this time with my rug and great-coat on top of me—I tried to believe I was in my cosy flat at home. But I never could sleep with windows rattling! The rhythm is so spasmodic and annoying. I had to get out again and wedge the frames with matches. I was just getting acclimatized to the sheets, and was in the act of dozing off, when a violent gust of wind blew a lot of soot down the chimney and filled the room with smoke! I rang the bell, and when the chamber-maid appeared (she was not attractive), I asked her to rake out the fire and open the windows. In the next few minutes my music-paper had been blown all over the floor, and the room was as cold as an ice-house. I got up, picked up the paper, closed the windows—the match work had to be done all over again—and returned to bed.

By this time my temper was getting ruffled, but I consoled myself with the thought that as my blood was up I should probably warm the bed sooner. In half an hour or so I dozed off again, when "Bang-bang! shriek-shriek! bang-bang!" The shunting had commenced.

For the next twenty minutes it was as if a heavy goods train was trying to leave the metals and mount the platform. To simulate sleep under such conditions was a mockery, so I rose, lit the gas, put on my dressing-gown and overcoat, wrapped the rug round my feet, and started to map out my work for the morning. By doing this overnight, I reasoned, I need not get up so early to-morrow.

But everything in the room was smothered in soot, so I only spoiled several sheets of music-paper, and when I became so thoroughly chilled that my teeth chattered and my knees trembled, I gave up the idea and went back to bed. But not to sleep—oh, dear, no, for by this time I was so wide awake that a bed of swansdown and a fairies' lullaby would not have wooed me to slumber. I tossed about from side to side, the bed-clothes following. A dozen times I shook the pillow and gathered up my coat from the floor, but all to no purpose. Sleep was a stranger to me that awful night.

When the damp grey morning came, I rose, dressed, made my way downstairs, unbolted the front door, and went out. It was about seven o'clock, and I met a postman. I asked him if the postmaster would be up so early, and he said that he had just gone along the front. So I hastened in that direction in the hope of overtaking him. He was singing to himself "When Other Lips" when I caught him up, and greeted me with "Good morning; hope you slept well. Found the place comfortable? Hope the trains didn't bother you?"

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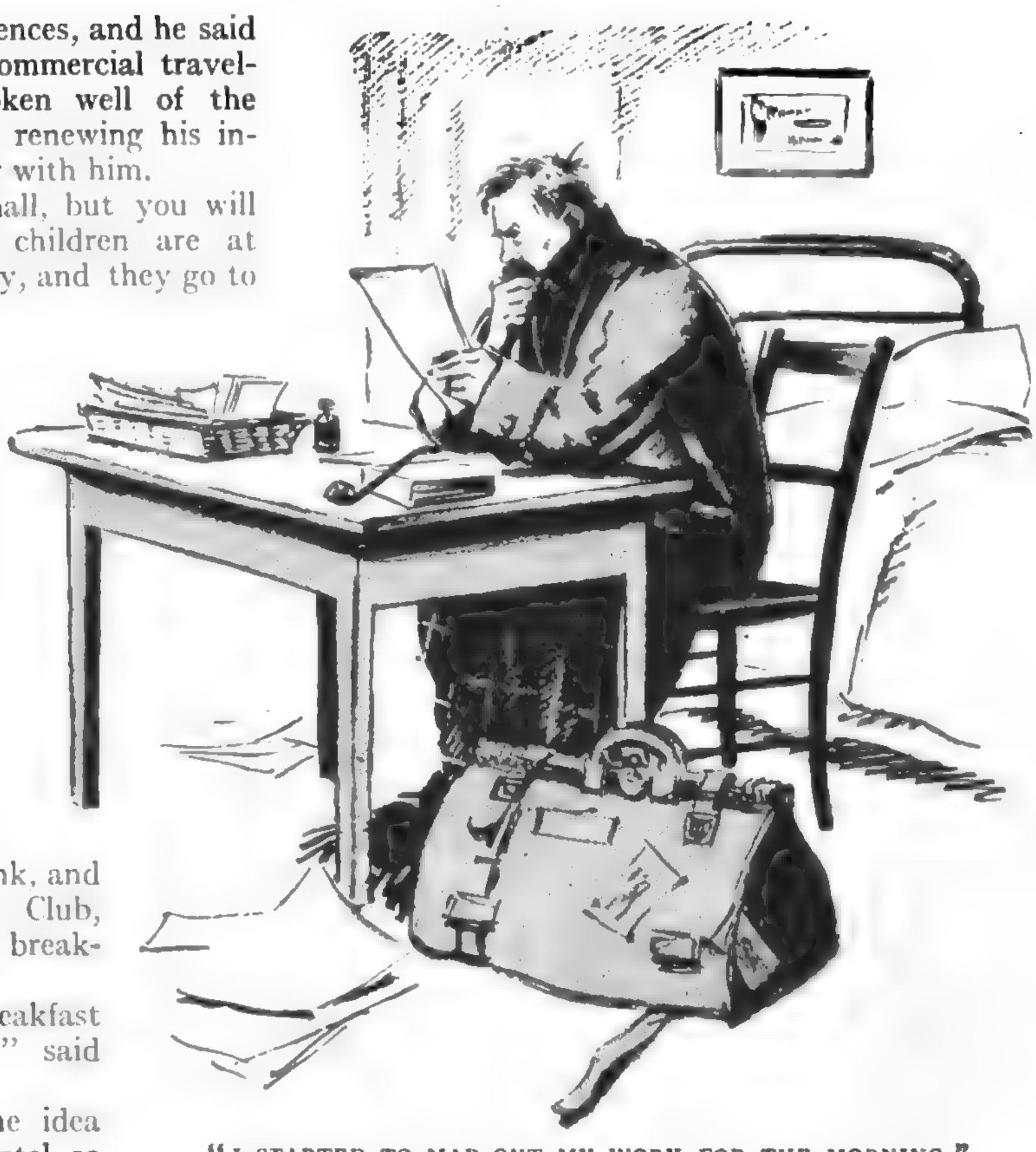
I related my experiences, and he said he was very sorry—commercial travellers had always spoken well of the hotel—and ended by renewing his invitation to me to stay with him.

"Our house is small, but you will find it quiet. The children are at school most of the day, and they go to bed early."

This sounded plausible, so I thanked him and said that if he was sure it would not cause any inconvenience, I should be glad to come. We walked to the end of the Esplanade and along the principal streets of the town, my friend pointing out the beauties of the clock tower, the skating rink, and the Working Men's Club, until it was time for breakfast.

"You will take breakfast with us, of course?" said the postmaster.

I did not relish the idea of taking it at the hotel, so I readily agreed, and soon we arrived at the post-office.



"I STARTED TO MAP OUT MY WORK FOR THE MORNING."

The dwelling-house, a neat-looking three-storeyed building, adjoined the post-office, and at breakfast I was introduced to the postmaster's wife, a healthy-looking woman of about forty, a girl aged thirteen, two sturdy boys aged nine and seven respectively, and a pale young man, Mr. Seedling, the lodger.

"My husband tells me you have not had a restful night," said Mrs. Bullet, "but you will be nice and quiet here, and we will try to make you comfortable. And I feel sure Mr. Seedling won't mind sleeping with the boys for a few nights."

Mr. Seedling muttered something in response which did not suggest extreme joy at the proposition. I said I was afraid I was putting them to a great deal of inconvenience, but Mrs. Bullet assured me that my presence would make no difference, and that I should be "treated as one of the family."

Family life was not what I had come for. But they meant well, these good people, and I should only have to be sociable at meal-times.

After breakfast I went back to the hotel to pay my bill and get my bag. The landlord seemed surprised that I had risen so early. He hoped it wasn't because of the chimney; he would have it swept at once.

"Thanks," I said, "but don't trouble on my account, for I find I have to return to London sooner than I expected."

I chose the mild deception in preference to the true explanation, because anything like a bother annoys me.

I started very well in my new lodging, and by teatime had made some progress with my work. The children, too, seemed to like me, and after tea I promised to take them for a walk. This project, however, was spoiled by the rain, so Mr. Bullet suggested a little music. We therefore adjourned to the drawing-room, where I listened to "Dorothy's latest piece," and accompanied Mr. Bullet in several of his favourite songs. Then Mr. Seedling appeared, and was induced to exhibit his skill on the mandoline—my pet aversion—after which I played some little pieces of my own, and tried to explain the mysteries of composition.

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After an hour spent in this way I begged to be excused, and retired to my room for work. I was just in the middle of a rather complicated piece of part-writing, when I heard sounds from the piano. It was "Home, Sweet Home," with a "four-a-penny" left-hand part. This immortal composition did not blend with the work I was engaged upon. It was in a totally different style and another key. Feeling huffy at being disturbed, I went downstairs, and meeting Mrs. Bullet in the passage I asked if the rain had stopped.

"I'm afraid it's set in for a wet evening," she replied.

"Is that your daughter playing?" I timidly inquired.

"Oh, yes; she is having a lesson. Doesn't she get on nicely?"

I said she seemed to have a decided talent for music, and asked how long the lesson would last.

"Only half an hour, and then it will be all quiet for you," she replied.

"Please don't think of me," I said. "I can amuse the boys until their bedtime."

This was a rash thing to say; though, truth to tell, I must own to being very fond of children—that is, when I have not any work on hand, and always providing they have clean fingers and are under proper control.

The boys no sooner heard that I would play with them than they were upon me like an avalanche. We would play at "bears." Why they used the plural I could not see, as apparently there was to be only one bear—*they* were to be my keepers! It was no use protesting that bears were never ridden; I had to crawl along the passage on all fours, with one boy on my back and the other urging me on with a stick.

I was the first to get tired, and, as a means of escape, invited them up to my room that I might read to them until the music-lesson was over. I prided myself on being a very good reader to children—at least, my married sister has told me so—but on this occasion I did not seem to hit the mark. The children's attention seemed drawn to my music-paper. "What funny writing!" "What a long



"MR. SEEDLING WAS INDUCED TO EXHIBIT HIS SKILL ON THE MANDOLINE."

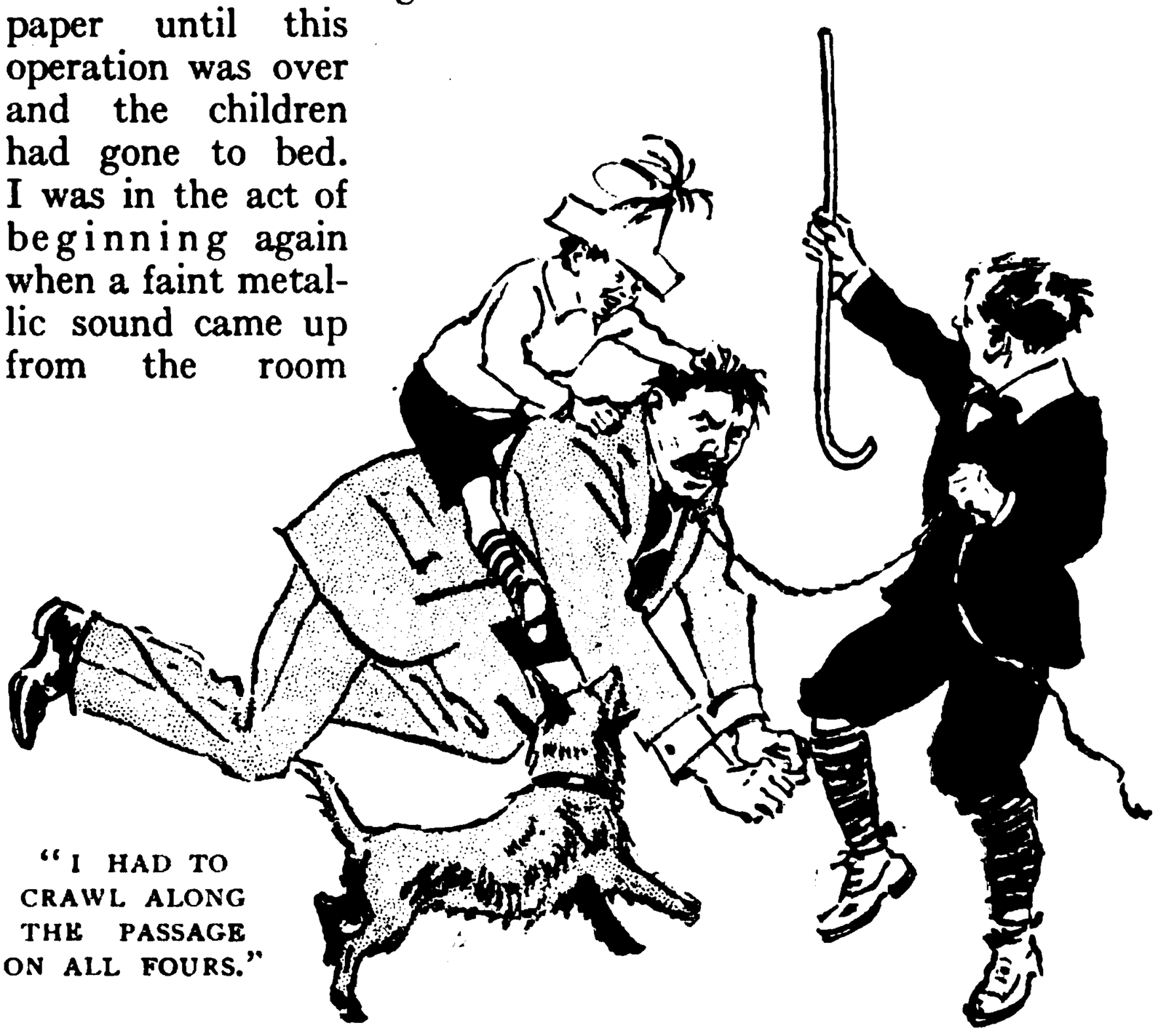
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ruler!" "What are all those funny little dots?" etc. I explained that I was composing music, and said if they would keep their hands off it, perhaps I would play it to them to-morrow.

"Now run away; it must be nearly bed-time, and Dorothy has finished her music-lesson," I said, giving them each a penny as a token of good faith.

At this they backed out of the room very reluctantly and left me in peace. With a sigh I recommenced work. I had done about six bars when I was interrupted by sounds of crying, smacking, and all the noise incidental to the children having a bath. I read the paper until this operation was over and the children had gone to bed. I was in the act of beginning again when a faint metallic sound came up from the room below. I listened. Yes, it was the mandoline!



"I HAD TO CRAWL ALONG THE PASSAGE ON ALL FOURS."

This was too much. I went downstairs, and found the postmaster in the kitchen cleaning his bicycle.

"Mr. Bullet," I said, "I am sorry to leave you, but I can't work in your house. I have so much to do and so little time to do it in that—well, I can't write music with that mandoline going."

"Oh, he'll soon stop; don't mind him," said Mr. Bullet.

"But I *do* mind him," I said, "and I really cannot——"

"He's only playing because it's too wet to go out, and I can't offend him. You see, he gave up his room to oblige you," said Mr. Bullet.

This line of reasoning suddenly reminded me of my position. Here was I, a guest in this good man's house, making myself a nuisance to everybody just because I wanted to be quiet. It was preposterous. I apologized, and said I had been overwrought through not having had enough sleep the night before. I would go for a walk and get some air, when doubtless I should feel better.

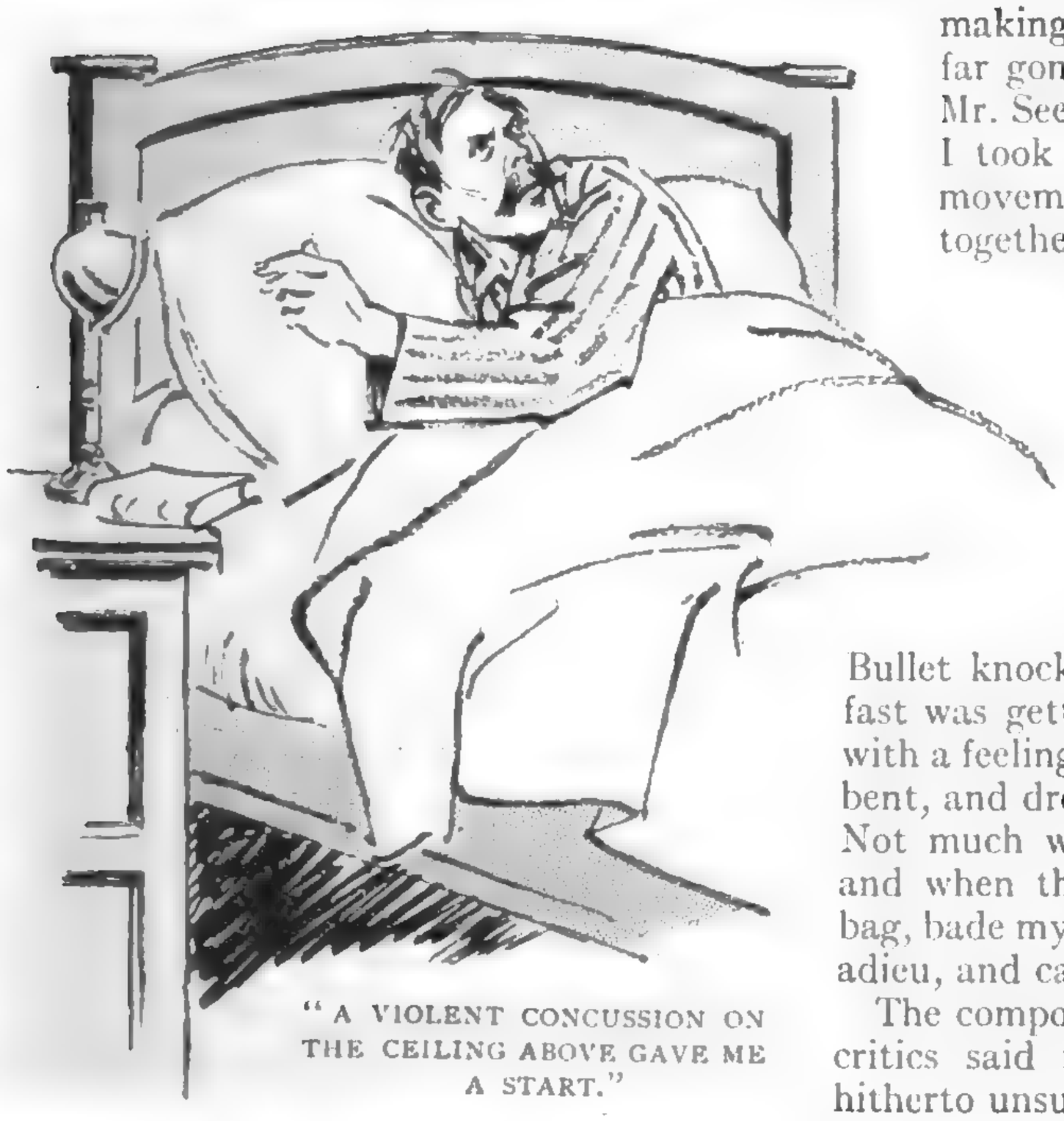
I took my coat and umbrella and went out, feeling I had made a fool of myself. And then it occurred to me how much the average man dislikes quiet. Make a noise, and people will love you. Be as noisy as you can during life—you *must* be quiet when you are dead. And I realized why hospitals are always built in the noisiest parts of a town; even invalids want noise, for it reminds them they are still alive. And all the thousand and one discordant sounds that make up the pandemonium inseparable to a big city—they are a necessity; we couldn't exist without them. And yet I, a miserable worm, was fretting and fuming because I could not burrow somewhere and be quiet! True, it was a necessity for my work; but I would give up composing, and become a boiler-maker.

When I got back to the house everybody except the postmaster had gone to bed. As I went in he was singing, "Yes, let me like a soldier fall." I bade him a sorrowful "Good night." I was so tired I believe I could have slept on a steam roundabout. But the bed I was in had a wire mattress with a very pronounced sag in the middle. Now, I could never sleep in a hammock, and it is always a matter of wonder to me how sailors can prefer one. I always like to lie straight out, not doubled up in the shape of a "V." To make matters worse, there was an unmistakable snore proceeding from somewhere. These conditions caused my sleep to be fitful, to say the least, and certainly not refreshing. About two o'clock a violent concussion on the ceiling above gave me a start. It was only Georgie falling out of bed!

At five the postmen began to assemble, and for the next hour tramped about the adjoining

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"A VIOLENT CONCUSSION ON THE CEILING ABOVE GAVE ME A START."

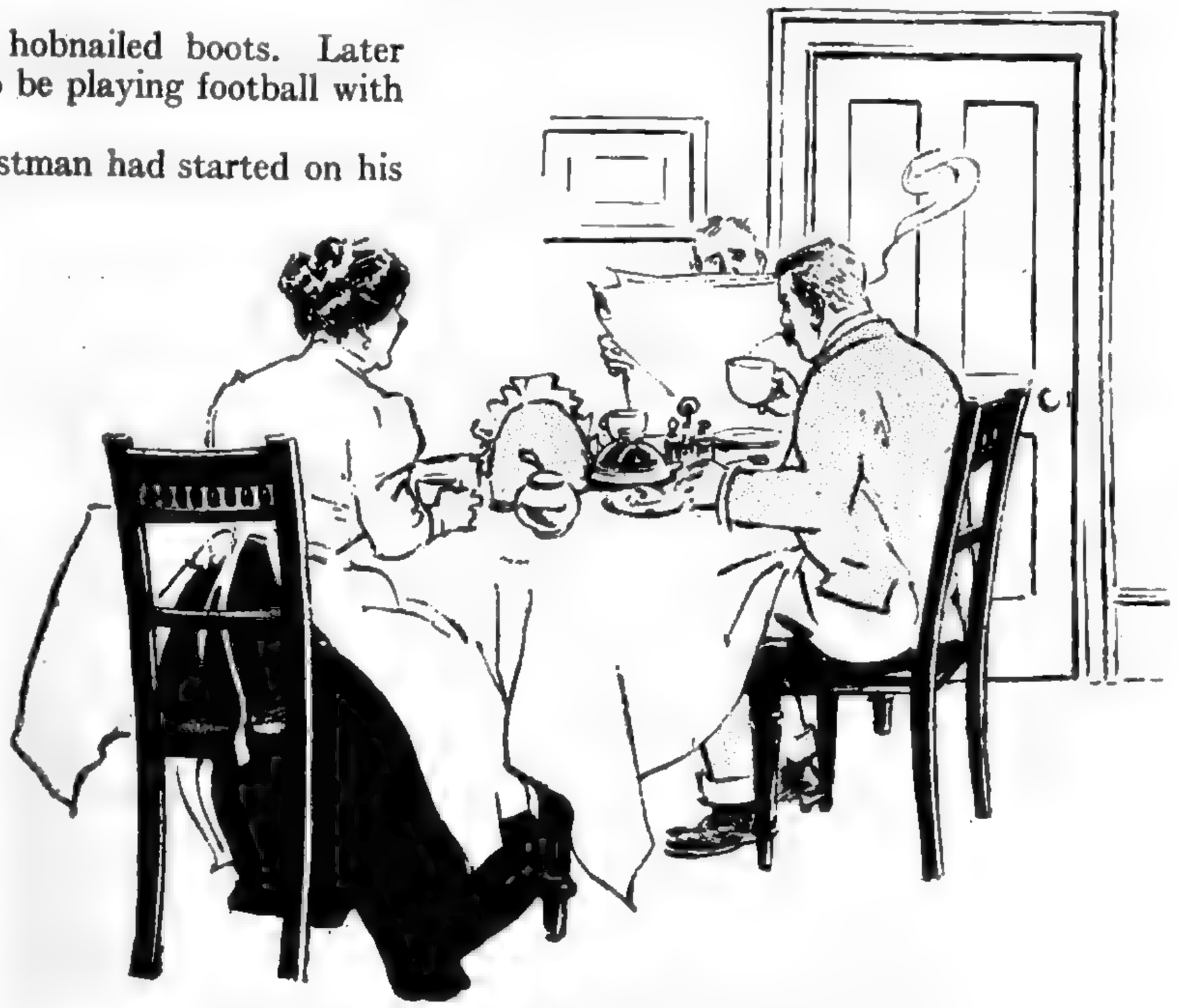
After a fairly peaceful interval, during which I supposed they were having breakfast, there was a clattering up and down the passage, followed by a banging of the street door, and I surmised that the children had gone to school. I had intended getting up early and making up for lost time, but I was too far gone for any such effort. I heard Mr. Seedling get out of bed and dress; I took part (sympathetically) in all his movements. We stood on one leg together, knocked our shins on the bed-post together, searched on the floor for a collar-stud together, fetched the shaving water together, cut our chins together, muttered a blessing together, and finally went downstairs together. Then I turned over and slept!

At half-past nine Mrs. Bullet knocked on my door to say the breakfast was getting cold. I crawled out of bed with a feeling that my spine was permanently bent, and dressed myself in very slow time. Not much was said at the breakfast-table, and when the meal was over I packed my bag, bade my host and his wife an affectionate adieu, and caught the first train to London.

The composition *was* finished in time. The critics said it revealed a depth of feeling hitherto unsuspected in me!

post-office in their hobnailed boots. Later on they appeared to be playing football with the mail-bags.

When the last postman had started on his round the children above me began to get up, and for some moments seemed to be vaulting over their beds. Then I heard the lodger's voice ordering them to be quiet. I thought this very kind of him, and forgave him the mandoline incident. The children's dressing seemed to last an interminable time, but eventually I heard them go downstairs.



"NOT MUCH WAS SAID AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE."

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The Longest Day of Her Life.

By W. B. MAXWELL.

Illustrated by Cyrus Cuneo.

IT was the longest day of her life, and yet it contained very little action; nearly all of it was thought.

It opened with a quarrel between her and her husband. While brushing her nice dark hair she reproached him for his callous indifference about her young cousin Dick; and he, appearing and disappearing on the threshold of his dressing-room, defended himself sternly.

"Why not?" she said, brushing with accelerated vigour. "You *know* Sir George; you brag of being an old friend. Then why should you refuse to employ your influence?"

"Because I am not fond of asking favours."

"You mean, for other people! You never mind asking favours for yourself."

"You have no right to say that."

"Ah, you don't like the truth." And Ethel brushed her hair with furious energy. "You are to say anything to me, however rude and brutal; but if I—if *I* venture to——"

"Ethel"—and Jack's tone changed from hardness and weight to a mocking lightness—"you probably don't realize the deteriorating effect of these tantrums. To oblige me, look at your face in the glass."

"I shall see the face of a very unhappy woman—a woman who sometimes wishes she was dead."

"Oh, don't talk such theatrical rubbish!"

Outside the windows there were only pretty things to see—blue sky above the heights of Wimbledon; Coombe Woods sleeping in the July sunshine; a peep of the broad avenue, the gabled roofs, the neat little gardens of what nearly all the residents agreed in thinking a suburban paradise.

And inside the house everything was pretty also. The sunlight, growing brighter every minute, flashed into the spacious upper landing, the square hall, and the well-proportioned lower rooms; it lit up the colours of hearth-rugs, the glaze of blue and white tiles, the lustre of brass grates; it shone upon taste, comfort, even modest luxury; it showed, altogether, the happy, prosperous state of affairs that caused their neighbours to speak of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Ingram as a couple whose good fortune anybody might envy.

Now the envied couple had come downstairs to breakfast in their pretty dining-room, and, so long as the parlour-maid remained with them, there was a truce to the quarrel.

"Have some omelette, Ethel, or kedgeree?"

"Kedgeree, please."

They *ought* to have been happy. The sunlight seemed so gay and cheerful; their back garden was full of flowers; branches of trees were gently swaying, birds were singing, and through the open casements a gentle air came creeping from the hillside to soften their hearts. And they themselves looked so nice—he a tall, rather handsome man of thirty-five, clean-shaven, strong-featured, with hair brushed back from a respectably broad forehead; and she a dark-haired, blue-eyed, really attractive young woman of twenty-seven.

Directly the parlour-maid withdrew hostilities were resumed.

"So now"—and he snorted contemptuously—"you are going to make it a crime if I refuse to carry your whole family on my shoulders."

"Oh, no, Jack! I have learnt in these five years how very little carrying power your shoulders possess."

It was as though there had been a poison in their blood. They stung themselves and each other; they took a mad pleasure in inflicting pain; their eyes glowed whenever they thought of something peculiarly unkind that could be said next. But with him there was all the time something querulous and pathetic, rather than purely wrathful, a droop of the lip, a tremulousness of the voice, a shakiness of the hand—even when he was putting in his very nastiest strokes.

"I married *you*, not your relations. Heaven knows, I've done enough for them already; but if you choose to make them an unceasing nuisance——"

Then came an outburst from Ethel. He

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had done nothing for her family, except slight them, insult them, make of them the ready weapon with which he struck at his wife.

Jack got up from his ruined breakfast and moved about the room. The omelette tasted as if it had been made of election eggs, the milk was sour, the tea bitter, and the toast smelt of dust and ashes.

Throughout the summer there had been so many of these senseless wrangles; but to-day the quarrel intensified, steadily gathered energy, until it culminated with explosive force in Ethel's astounding declaration:—

"Jack, this decides me. It's your own fault. I've tried—Heaven knows I've tried; but I can't bear it. I can't go on living with you."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Exactly what I say. My life has become one long torment. You are always horrid to me—systematically cruel to me, and to all I love; and I can't—I won't—go on with it."

This was like the firing of a big gun, after which it seems futile to use field-pieces and musketry. They stared at each other in silence, Ethel looking pale and rather frightened, Jack looking pale and completely flabbergasted.



"JACK, THIS DECIDES ME. IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT. I'VE TRIED—HEAVEN KNOWS I'VE TRIED; BUT I CAN'T BEAR IT."

"Ethel!" After a breathing pause he spoke quietly and seriously, almost apologetically. "You know—you must know—all that you are to me."

"No, I don't. You liked me once, but it's over and done with; otherwise you couldn't treat me so hatefully."

"My dear girl, married life is a matter of give and take. Each partner should make allowances—should understand things."

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"I understand too well."

Then he distinctly expressed regret for ever having been harsh or snappish, and he pleaded that the cause of such mistakes was his notoriously bad health.

"Then why don't you consult a doctor?" She did not for a moment believe in his ill-health. It was the excuse that he always made. "Dr. Arnold says you're all right. But if you don't trust his judgment, go and see some London specialist."

"Oh, no," he said, wearily. "Doctors can't help me."

"Not if there's nothing the matter with you."

He shrugged his shoulders and laughed bitterly.

"Thank you, Ethel, for this remarkable display of your sympathy."

Then, after a few moments' hesitation, she proposed that they should go straight to London and obtain the highest medical opinion on his case. She had hesitated because of a somewhat important afternoon engagement, but she decided that the engagement must be cancelled. It seemed now that the thing of paramount importance was to march off her husband as though he were a naughty child, and to watch and hear a famous physician making him look supremely foolish. Yes, she would deprive him at once and for ever of this flimsy excuse for incessant brutality.

His reluctance to undertake a useless and costly excursion merely made her more obstinately determined to carry the point. And at last she carried it.

"Very well," he said, fretfully, and his lips drooped. "I'll go, since you are good enough to say that it will relieve your mind."

"It will, enormously. And now I'll ask Dr. Arnold who's the cleverest man in the whole of London."

Next minute she had put on her burnt-straw hat, swung a gauze scarf round her neck, and was hurrying along the avenue. On either side of the plane trees stood all the little houses, with their little gardens, gabled roofs, and fantastic porches—all so neat and trim, but each perhaps holding its small and compact tragedy of thwarted hope and disappointed love.

Dr. Arnold seemed surprised when she explained her errand. He thought that she need not be anxious. Certainly her husband suffered from nerves and liver, but then who doesn't? However, another opinion could be obtained, and he, Dr. Arnold, would not be huffed. Of course not.

"As you say, it will relieve your mind. Well, then, Mrs. Ingram, I advise you to take him to Dr. Haywarth, No. 261, Welbeck Street. Yes, Haywarth will be the man. And I'll write a letter—for you to give Haywarth. And I'll telegraph, too, to let him know you are coming."

Dr. Arnold wrote the letter and made out his telegraphic message.

"Perhaps you'll kindly send the telegram?"

"Yes, I'm going to the post-office."

"And now may I offer a word of advice on my own account?" Dr. Arnold looked at his charming visitor gravely but very kindly. "Free gratis," and he smiled. "Haywarth will give you a good two guineas' worth, but he doesn't know your husband as well as I do, and he doesn't know you either. You are both highly-strung, nervy people, and what you both ought to avoid is worrying yourselves needlessly. The world is large. Try change of scene and change of air. Run away from worry."

Ethel listened meekly, and understood without resentment that Dr. Arnold had penetrated some of her domestic secrets. It did not matter. He had changed from a doctor into a friend during that period which she always spoke of and thought of as "her great trouble."

At the post-office she sent off the telegram to Dr. Haywarth, and then wrote and sent another one—to a Mr. Cyril Brett:—

"To-day's arrangement unavoidably postponed.—E."

It was a slow train that stopped at nearly every station, and all the way to Waterloo she was thinking.

A neighbour had got into their compartment, and he and Jack were deep in talk about local topics. From time to time she glanced at them, and thought that they were the two most uninteresting men on the face of the broad earth.

Yet one of them was the man that she had loved with all her heart. She thought of those bygone days, when the sight of him thrilled her, when he seemed gloriously handsome as well as appallingly clever, when she knelt by her bedside in her common home and prayed that he might give her his love and make her his wife. She thought of her own pride when the prayer had been granted, of the congratulations of other people, of the rapture in the home circle.

"Fancy!" mamma had said. "Just fancy our E. winning such a prize!"

The fact was that the family considered

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Mr. Jack Ingram "a cut above them." He was well-connected, a gentleman at large, with an income that rendered professional labours unnecessary, and, further than this, he was almost what is called "a celebrity." He had written a book, he contributed articles to learned reviews, his photograph had appeared in illustrated newspapers.

But somehow with Jack nothing ever came to anything. He wrote no second book; he just settled down as a muddling sort of literary student, instead of being an active producer, and gradually he adopted the carpingly critical tone of the disappointed man who recognizes his own failure and sneers at everybody else's success. And it was the same story in regard to matters of less moment. His smashes and drives at lawn-tennis used to be awful and overpowering, while now he sent everything into the net; he played a good game at golf, and now his handicap had been put up to eighteen; he had rowed in a college boat, and yet at their last river picnic he caught a crab, and was frankly mocked by that boy, Cyril Brett. He danced beautifully, and now he had grown clumsy in the old dances, and was too lazy to learn the new ones. He used to be full of life and gaiety; now he was dull and prosaic, shunning fun, hating frolic, bringing to every festive gathering a glum face and a silent tongue.

But, worst of all, his bad temper! It was that which had worn out her and her love together. And his pitiful excuses, his harpings on nervous debility, weak digestion, sleeplessness — something unmanlike, contemptible, in such hypochondriacal twaddle!

Then she thought of her great grief, of those two empty rooms—rooms furnished and made ready, but never used. She raised her newspaper to hide her face, because her eyes had filled with tears, as they always did when anything recalled her great grief. Jack had been kind to her before her baby was born, and kind after her baby died. But that was three years ago. She hardened her heart.

He did not value her. He had said that she was witty and amusing, but now he let her see that her poor little efforts after facetiousness bored him. He praised other women, admired their frocks—never hers. He pretended to delight in hearing her sing, but he never wanted to hear her sing now. He had confessed one night that "Good-bye, Summer" gave him a headache. That speech was as monstrous a cruelty as the slitting of a nightingale's throat. She had ceased to sing after that.

He neglected her; he threw her on her own resources. He never asked where she was going when she went out, or where she had been when she came in. Her doings did not interest him.

The train stopped again, and she heard his voice, louder and more insistent, as he talked to their neighbour.

"If you ask me, they've made a hideous *fiasco* of the fifth green." He was speaking with intense earnestness, and his voice became harsh and grating. "I warned them last February. My knowledge and experience had taught me that it is madness to believe any worm-killer can be safely——"

There! He was interested *now*. That was a good example! And she thought of him with bitterness. A dull and incompetent person, fatuously conceited, rigidly self-centred.

The train moved slowly on, and her thoughts took wings, lifted her from the cushioned seat, and flew far away with her. She was thinking of life and of youth, the spell and fascination of moonlit nights, the glamour that hangs over unknown paths that are trodden in darkness, the invincible human craving for new and untried sensations. She thought of that boy—that extremely youthful young man—and of her throb of indignation on the night when he held her in his arms and kissed her lips.

It was the softest, warmest night in June—after the river picnic—and they were crossing a field where hay had been cut; they two together, and the others walking on ahead through the black patches of shadow and the white spaces of moonlight. "Mr. Brett, how dare you! How *dare* you!" In imagination she could hear again the thrilling anger of her whispered words.

Immediately, and still more so during the next few days, she had put the young man back in his proper place. She lectured him severely before she consented to overlook his offence. And he had never offended again. When he called upon her, or when she happened to meet him out walking, they just talked sentiment—vague regret, unformulated repinings—he never going beyond the limits of conjecture as to their fate if only she were free, and she remaining firm in the solid fact that she was *not* free.

No one could say that, if she had been unfaithful in thought, she had been unfaithful in deeds—that is, in big deeds. But how would it all end?

The train had passed Vauxhall without her being aware of its stopping. She glanced at Jack again, and he seemed old—going bald,

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all the freshness of youth vanished already, ugly lines about his eyes, a man that no one could fall in love with now. And he would grow older and older, and nothing would ever come to open their lives—no love, no fame, no wealth ; they would be perpetual prisoners in their commonplace villa. Because of a marriage ring she was tied to him till death.

As they approached the physician's door a patient came out of it. He was a grey-haired, elderly man, apparently quite a humble person in a suit of working clothes, and he brushed against Ethel's pretty muslin dress as he passed. He was staring straight ahead, not looking to the right or to the left, and something in the expression of his unseeing eyes startled Ethel.

"Jack," she said, with her hand on her husband's arm, "did you see that man's face?"

"No. What about it?"

"It was like the face of a man who has received his death sentence." Then she gave a shiver and laughed. "At any rate, he looked *really* ill."

She could not refrain from that little dig at the person who merely pretended to be ill. This was to be her hour of triumph, and she meant to enjoy it.

But the visit to famous Dr. Haywarth proved disappointing, enervating, fruitless of any immediate results.

He was a solemn, forbidding kind of man, with an odd blending of fussiness and absent-mindedness in his manner when he began to talk to the visitors.

"Yes, yes—just so." And he got up from the table at which he had been writing. "Good day to you, Mr. Ingram—and Mrs. Ingram. I have read the letter which you kindly sent in to me—from, ah, Dr. Arnold. Yes, yes—I am quite ready," and he hastily arranged the papers on his blotting-pad. "And now, if you please, Mrs. Ingram, I will see your husband alone."

"Oh, but I should like to stay and hear your verdict."

"You shall come in afterwards. Yes, yes—that will be better."

The butler was standing at the open door of the consulting-room, and Ethel felt constrained to allow herself to be ushered back to the waiting-room.

This was not what she had bargained for. The best part of her treat was spoilt already. She wanted to listen to the physician's very own words and watch Jack's discomfiture as he, too, listened to them. Now it would be easy for Jack to recover his self-possession. He would have time to pull himself together.

She glanced at the ugly black clock on the draped mantel-shelf, opened and shut two or three preposterous books on the big table, then sat on a chair near a window and drummed irritably with a high-heeled shoe. The vast, dull, depressing room was empty, so she could make herself quite at home.

Presently her heels became motionless. She was thinking again.

What would be the end of all the note-writing, appointment-making, and sentiment-talking with Cyril? Repressed tears moistened her eyelids. She was too lonely; her life was unbearable. She could not go on with it for ever. If not this one, then someone else eventually. Nothing to hold her in restraint—no child, no truly unbreakable tie. Sooner or later she might do what so many have done—go away to disgrace with a lover, or stay at home in infamy until discovered.

But if she were free! Suppose this doctor has found something wrong. Suppose he is even now saying words that promise emancipation. Unbidden, swift mental pictures came thronging—the sick bed, the widow's dress, the whole pageant of woe—freedom.

She shivered, and turned from the window to look at the clock. Surely they were being a long time about it in the other room!

She moved to the table, sat down there, and, taking up one of the books, observed that her hand was trembling. She looked at the clock nervously. How long had Jack been closeted with the doctor? It seemed an incredible time.

And as the heavy minutes dragged by she became more and more nervous. Oh, there *must* be something wrong! When the butler came to tell her that she might return to the other room, he found her pacing to and fro in an agitated manner.

"Well," she asked, anxiously, almost breathlessly, "what is it? Please tell me everything—don't keep me in suspense."

Jack was looking much as usual, not particularly foolish, as he fumbled in his waistcoat pocket for the two sovereigns and the two shillings. Dr. Haywarth was seated at his desk, and it seemed to her when he turned that his face was preternaturally grave.

"Excuse me," he said, fussily. "I am writing a letter to—ah—Dr. Arnold—with a note." And he went on writing. "Yes, yes—if you'll allow me—I'll finish my letter, and then perhaps Mr. Ingram will take it back with him, and deliver it."

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But Ethel could not contain herself. She asked eager questions, until Dr. Haywarth, turning with a flustered air, begged her not to interrupt him. Then at last he accomplished his task, hurriedly picked up and folded pieces of paper, put them in an envelope, and rose from the desk.

"Well?" said Ethel again.

"Here we are, then," said Dr. Haywarth. exchange for the sovereigns and shillings, shook hands, bowed.

Outside in the street Ethel took her husband's arm and pressed it.

"Now, what did he say?"

"Well, really very little, Ethel."

"But tell me—whatever it was."

"Oh, well—I was to take care of myself. It amounted to that—as I understood it.



"'WELL,' SHE ASKED, ANXIOUSLY, ALMOST BREATHLESSLY, 'WHAT IS IT? PLEASE TELL ME EVERYTHING—DON'T KEEP ME IN SUSPENSE.'"

"This is for our good friend Arnold, and he will convey my ideas as to treatment and so forth. And now—the fact is, I am due at the hospital. You will, I am sure, excuse me."

He gave the letter to Jack Ingram in

But I'll tell you all about it later on—this evening."

"This evening! What do you mean? You are not going to leave me now?"

Truly, however, it was what Jack meant to do. He explained more or less apologeti-

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cally that, having wasted half the day, he would use the rest of it for business.

"Business! What business?"

"There are one or two things I could tackle now that I'm up here."

"Very well," said Ethel, quietly and coldly.

"And, as you are going back, you might take this precious letter, and hand it over to Arnold."

"Oh, certainly."

"Then good-bye, dear. I'll be home to dinner without fail."

She walked away, down Welbeck Street and into Wigmore Street, swelling with indignation. Jack must have plainly seen her anxiety, her affectionate concern, and yet he had deserted her—had just cast her adrift, to calm down unassisted as best she could. That was *like* Jack.

Regard for him had brought her to London, but he could not even escort her to Waterloo—could not even remember that it was nearly one o'clock, and that gongs all over the universe were announcing the midday meal. He, of course, would lunch at his sumptuous club, and she thought of him established there, eating, drinking, chattering. Perhaps, she thought, bitterly, he would find another delightful companion with whom he could go on talking about worm-killers.

She herself lunched at the restaurant of the illustrious drapers in Wigmore Street, and then dispatched a telegram—to Mr. Cyril Brett:—

"You may come and see me any time after three.—E."

She caught a good train from Waterloo, but, fast as it went, her thoughts travelled more rapidly. They flashed far into the past and far into the future. Then gradually they came back to the present, remained with her in the compartment, settled themselves on the envelope that she was holding in her ungloved hand.

She knew that inside the envelope there lay a statement of the plain, indisputable fact that Jack had nothing the matter with him. Her strange dread—that baseless anxiety which for a few moments she generously entertained—had long since gone. This evening Jack would be forced to confess that Dr. Haywarth had found nothing wrong, although he would endeavour to gloze it over and persuade her, if he could, that a verdict had been given in his favour. He would swear that this fussily arrogant physician had diagnosed a state of nerves that might justify any amount of ill-temper. And perhaps Dr. Arnold would back him up.

But why should she wait until the evening to hear what either of them said, or to know the contents of this envelope? The letter concerned her just as much as Jack—a thousand, a million times more, because perhaps the conduct of her whole future life depended on it.

Suddenly a sense of her sufferings, an angry revolt against the manner in which she had been ignored, trampled on, both by Jack and Dr. Haywarth, moved her to decisive action. She boldly tore open the envelope.

"Dear Dr. Arnold,—Many thanks for your note *in re* Mr. Ingram. I have gone into his case carefully, and I embody my views and suggestions in the enclosed memorandum."

That was the letter—just polite flummery. Now for the memorandum. The real verdict would be in this.

The wind blew in upon her flushed face, blowing her little forehead curls against the brim of her hat, making the gauze scarf fly out and flap noisily, as she looked at Dr. Haywarth's medical jargon. Just a half-sheet of note-paper, with the big words underlined, and the rest hastily, carelessly scribbled—not much for two guineas!

"*Advanced aortic stenosis.* Dilatation of the heart. Failing compensation.

"*Prognosis.* Unfavourable. A sudden ending may be expected. At best, a few months only can be allowed.

"*Treatment.*—Absolute rest. Removal from his present unsatisfactory surroundings, which appear detrimental to his comfort."

The wind blew in upon her livid cheeks, retracted lips, and chattering teeth. She had grasped the full meaning of the verdict. It was a death sentence.

She did not observe how the porters shouted at her when she nearly fell in getting out of the train before it came to rest at the platform, how the collector followed her a little way because she had not given up her ticket, or how two neighbours and a butcher's boy stared as she ran along the avenue.

Now she was at Dr. Arnold's door, banging on it with one hand while she rang his bell with the other.

"I want Dr. Arnold," she cried, breathlessly. "I must speak to him without an instant's delay."

But the doctor's maidservant could not comply with this excited demand. Dr. Arnold had received an urgent summons and gone off in his motor-car to see one of his patients, who had been taken ill at the

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seaside. He would not be back till quite late.

"Oh, dear, what shall I do? What *shall* I do?"

"Will you leave any message, ma'am?" And the servant offered Mrs. Ingram a paper-block and a pencil.

"No. Take me into his room, and let me write to him."

"Yes. Step this way, ma'am."

"Thank you. Leave me alone now."

Ethel wrote a frantic, disconnected letter and tore it up; tried again, and destroyed the second attempt, then burst into tears. Nearly an hour had passed, and a considerable inroad had been made upon Dr. Arnold's stock of stationery, before she completed her communication and packed it up in a large envelope with Dr. Haywarth's letter and memorandum.

"Yes, ma'am," said the maid, "I'll give it to him directly he returns."

"Thank you," said Ethel, with a catch in her voice.

She had implored Dr. Arnold to keep the appalling truth from Jack. She was ignorant as to medical etiquette or ethics, but she supplicated the doctor, for friendship's sake, to save her husband from a clear comprehension of his impending doom.

With bowed head and leaden footsteps she walked slowly home. The sun was shining on the red gables, on the roses in the front garden, on the copper tablet that decorated the garden gate with a silly name. *Baveno!* The name was the only stupid thing about their dear, dear little home. A builder's name. No fault of Jack's; he hated it as much as she did. She pushed the gate, and gave a little sob. *Baveno!*

"No, nothing, thank you."

She was trying to hide her face from the parlour-maid. Lizzie must not see that she had been crying. She crawled upstairs to her bedroom, locked the door, sat down in a chintz-covered arm-chair, and the dead weight of the catastrophe descended upon her.

She felt all cold and numb, making jerky sobs that sounded like hiccoughs, and with teeth that chattered at intervals. It was the horror of the thing taking possession of her. Doom! A few months only! Oh, he must not know—he should not know. But she must be brave and do her duty. And she thought of how she would guard him and watch over him during the remnant of his days. There might be other nurses, but no nurse could do for him what she would do. No, they should not take him from her.

Suddenly she grew hot, felt as if she was being stifled. A wave of shame had come sweeping through her brain. She thought of the physician's merciless words. "Removal from unsatisfactory surroundings, which are detrimental to his comfort."

Then, with a stab of anguish, she recognized that the words were true. A nagging wife—can such a companion seem otherwise than detrimental to the comfort of a dying man? A creature of moods and whims, who habitually thinks only of her own selfish pleasures, who bursts into shrewish protest if thwarted or controlled—can she persuade any stranger that she will in an hour change her whole character, transform herself into the calm saint who sits by sick beds and makes rough pillows smooth with one touch of a gentle hand?

The trained physician had infallibly read the secret of her restless, irritating ways. A single glance of those penetrating eyes had been sufficient. He had classed her among intrinsically worthless women. Jack had not betrayed her. He was too loyal to do that.

"Yes, what is it?"

Lizzie, the parlour-maid, was tapping at the bedroom door.

"Mr. Brett, ma'am, downstairs in the drawing-room."

"Send him away," said Ethel, loudly, almost fiercely. "Send him away. I can't see him. I can't see anybody."

She had forgotten his very existence. She moved across to a window, stood there, hidden behind the curtain, and presently she heard his voice down below among the roses.

"Really—are you sure about it?" And he chuckled idiotically. "Not a mistake, eh?"

"No, sir. The mistress—well, she isn't quite herself."

Ethel, watching furtively, saw him tap the Baveno tablet with his cane, and then slouch through the gate. A pink-faced lout in white flannels—something that had once seemed charming because it stimulated one's vain imagination; something that had become odious to the sight because it symbolized all one's treacherous folly. He disappeared, and at once was again forgotten.

She was thinking of that characteristic droop at the corners of Jack's mouth, of the fretful note in his voice, the questioning quaver which sounded like the lamentation of a sick child, of the golf weakness, the tennis faults, the river crabs that she had attributed to sheer clumsiness or laziness—little failures sad enough anyhow, but

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poignantly, maddeningly pathetic when one understood their real cause.

Near at hand flowers glowed vividly. At a distance the Coombe Woods spread out their beauty in the afternoon sunlight ; the whole world seemed so beautiful. Oh, to be snatched away from it—to turn cold, deaf, blind—to pass with one fluttered breath into eternal darkness ! Pity for him—melting yet burning pity—filled her heart.

She sank upon the floor, sobbed and writhed. These thoughts were insupportable. It seemed to her as if she herself would bear the guilt of all that was going to happen—as if by her impious attempts to forecast the future she had aroused the slumbering wrath of Destiny—as if in those cruel musings when she dared to imagine the possibility of widowhood and freedom she had released vast implacable forces of Nature—the dark powers of unending wickedness that prowl invisible, ever watching and waiting for a chance to pounce and strike.

" Ma'am—if you please, ma'am, I've brought you up some tea."

It was Lizzie tapping at the door again, talking through the door about nice hot cups of tea, saying she would put the tray on a chair outside the door.

" Go away," gasped Ethel. " Leave me alone. Go away."

She lay face downwards, sprawling, clutching, gurgling. Her shoulders moved unceasingly. Pity, horror, and remorse were shaking her to pieces.

When at last she gathered herself together she knelt and prayed for a little while before rising to her feet.

She must wash away the traces of tears. She must hide every sign of distress, speak in ordinarily calm tones, appear quite natural and untroubled. The looking-glass showed reddened circles round her eyes and a puffy, swollen nose. All this must be set right before Jack got home, or he might begin to question, doubt, and guess.

She was calmer now, walking about the house, standing first in one and then in the other of the two empty rooms, coming downstairs, looking at things here and there on the ground floor, and thinking all the time.

They had chosen that sofa at the shop in the Tottenham Court Road ; the Sheraton bureau—her own private desk and writing place—he had bought at Bath ; they picked up those two vases at Lucerne during their honeymoon. This Japanese lantern was a fancy of hers—an expensive fancy. It had been good of him to gratify her craving for the lantern—especially good, when one considered that he never cared for Oriental art.

She went to her desk, sat down, and automatically opened drawers, pulled out old letters, untied strings, and scattered neatly arranged packets. She must do something to occupy herself—to prevent herself from thinking. Two hours more, at least, before she could expect to see him.

The back garden was losing all its gay colours ; the house had thrown its shadow half-way across the lawn, and in the pearl-grey depths beneath motionless branches the flower-borders looked faint and dim. Inside and outside the house a strange stillness had fallen—disturbed only by the murmur of insects and the ticking of the hall-clock. As she listened to the dull beat of the clock she heard her heart beating tumultuously.

Fear again—fear of the unknown, of immensity, of eternity.

" Deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death." That was the Burial Service. It had come to her as the echo of words that she would have sworn she had forgotten—words spoken at her father's grave, heard then and never since—words that sink into the ear like drops of ice.

She raised her hands and pressed the sides of her forehead. She must be calm for his sake. No more emotion, and, above all, no more of this craven fear.

She began to read old letters, cherished and stored because they came from members of the family. She had suffered so grievously by reason of the loss of their writers' society, separation from mother, sisters, brothers, had caused so much pain, that she never had felt able to destroy the slightest scrawl that issued from the old home circle. Received two days ago, last year, at any time since her marriage, these letters, as they tumbled from their strings and confusedly piled themselves on the desk, seemed to symbolize her life itself, now of a sudden disarranged, overturned, smashed into chaos.

" Please thank Jack for the golf-clubs." That was a letter from Tom ages and ages ago. " He has supplied me, apparently, with a whole set ; and if he happens to have a bag to hold them, I shall be all there."

" The hamper arrived safely." This was a line or two from Sybil. " It is awfully decent of you and Jack to come to the rescue."

" Tell Jack that both suits fit Charles admirably." A long missive from mother. " It is very good of him to send the boots, too. I never *dreamed* that he would go out

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and buy a *new* pair. I only meant some old shoes that were not fine enough for his High-and-Mightiness. Pray thank him."

How good he had been to her people—really and truly! Grumbling a little now and then, but always responding generously to the covert or open appeal for assistance. These letters were full of acknowledgments. Yes, and how had they thanked him for such unfailing kindness? Nearly always grudgingly, often with a sneer. "His High-and-Mightiness!" That was an impertinence, even from mother to daughter. She tore up the long-treasured paper and tossed its fragments to the floor.

But soon she felt once more the stabbing twinges that are caused by personal regret. Phrases of sympathy, encouragement, advice met her eyes again and again throughout the letters from mamma.

"Sorry to hear Jack is as selfish as ever. I should like to give Jack a piece of my mind. I think you take things too easily. If we women don't assert ourselves, we quickly get pushed to the wall." And so on.

Mother and the rest of them had never understood him. They were incapable of doing so. He was too refined, too highly polished and cultivated, to be comprehensible to such intelligences as theirs. And she thought, sadly and wearily, that it is no use refusing to recognize hard facts. Her people were common—as common, really, if measured by lofty standards, as the people who live in slums, who squabble at table, insult and forgive one another every minute, who run along the dirty roads when they hear a policeman's whistle, and dance on the pavement when a piano-organ stops the way.

Poor dears! Not their fault! But it might have been better for her if, as a bride, she could have got right away from them. She might have been happier now if she had put them at a distance of a few hundred miles then. It is a fatal mistake to have your family so near that they can intermeddle in the most sacred things of your married life.

It had been mean of her, as undignified as it was treacherous, to speak to them of Jack's failings. How *could* she have borne to accept, without protest, such expressions of pity as she had just read? Too many of them to tear up. It would take too long to destroy all this evidence of her unworthiness. She put the letters back in the drawers, stuffed them in forcibly and scornfully, and sat with folded hands.

The shadows in the garden were lengthening, deepening; and in her thoughts grey depths had opened. Mother and sisters and brothers shrank smaller and smaller, became nothing, were gone. She thought and thought only of the man to whom she had bound herself, the lover who for a while had held the keys of heaven, the father of her child.

Thought and emotion blended now. The feelings as they arose in her breast *were* thoughts. She was feeling what she had felt in the five days of life that had been granted to their child—a yearning desire to protect the weak and helpless thing that she loved, to die if by her death it might live, to die for its sake a thousand times. And she would have died now to save her husband from the grip of doom.

Nothing mattered. His anger, his querulousness, his silences, and his frowns were a part of himself. It was him that she wanted —not novelty, passionate, untried joy, or freedom with anyone else; *him*, and no other —her own man-mate.

She went to the railway-station to meet him, just as she used to do years before when Baveno was still a delightful toy to which he came hurrying back each time that he was forced to leave it for a few hours.

She saw him at once, moving towards her through the crowd of meaningless figures, looking pale and sad, looking like the ghost of her happy past.

"Jack! Oh, Jack!"

She had taken his arm, and was pressing it against her side as they went down the covered slope to the avenue.

"Let's walk slowly," she murmured. "I am sure you are tired."

"Yes," he said, "I am rather tired. I've had a tiring day. I'll tell you about it when I've changed my clothes."

"Oh, don't dress for dinner. Don't—don't fatigue yourself unnecessarily."

But he would dress—he always would; and to-night when he came down to her in the drawing-room she was thinking that this undeviating habit was but another of his many merits. How wives must suffer when husbands are careless in such matters, not loving soap and water, feeling as comfortable in flannels or serge as in clean white shirts and silk-lined jackets!

"There," he said, cheerfully and bravely; "now for a piece of good news." And he explained that he had been all over London, to Hampstead and to Norwood, hunting that great Sir George, and at last securing his interest on behalf of Cousin Dick. "Sir George didn't absolutely promise, Ethel, but

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I know he'll throw his weight into our scale, and, honestly, I believe that Dick will get the job."

"Oh, Jack, what—what can I say?"

The thought of his goodness overwhelmed her. In all these long hours he had been toiling to give her pleasure.

"Nonsense. I was glad to take advantage of being on the spot, don't you know. When you spoke of it this morning—well, I just shirked the effort. That was all."

The effort! She trembled and drew in her breath. "Treatment: Absolute rest." Rushing here and there about the huge town, he might have dropped dead at any moment.

"Dinner is ready," said Lizzie, the parlour-maid.

They sat opposite to each other at the little round table exactly as they had sat night after night, and twice, when Lizzie's back was turned, she stretched her hand across to him and clasped his hand. When he praised the curried chicken she nearly broke down. But she must be brave. She ate of the curry, and it almost choked her.

Then after dinner they sat together in the drawing-room, he in the deep arm-chair, she on the sofa, and it was all exactly like last night or the night before. He did not talk while he smoked his first two cigarettes; he never did. After the second cigarette it was his custom to light a pipe and open a book.

But to-night he did not do this. He came to her, put his hand on her shoulder, and looked down at her with a wonderful expression in his eyes.

"Ethel, my dear, I've been making resolutions—plans for the future."

Ethel lowered her head, rapidly brought out a handkerchief, and blew her nose.

"You have been a good wife to me."

Her heart almost stopped beating. Did he know the truth?

"Yes, my pretty Ethel. It touched me when you spoke to Dr. Haywarth so anxiously. You would have cared—you would have really cared. But Haywarth was quite reassuring."

He did not know. She breathed again.

"Haywarth says it is all my stupid nerves, and I am to diet myself. And, Ethel, I have made a vow to obey him." And gently patting her shoulder he quoted "Maud": "Shall I not take care of all that I think, yea, even of wretched meat and drink, if I be dear to someone else, if I be dear——"

"Jack, please don't go on."

"Very well. Only this. I made another vow. Ethel, Heaven help me, I'll be a better husband to you in the years to come. Now don't be a silly girl. My darling, don't cry."

They sat side by side on the sofa, and the electric light shone upon all their pretty furniture, pictures, and knick-knacks, and it was as if every moment invisible bands were binding her more tightly to him.

The evening wore on, and it seemed to her that this lamp-lit room was the one small shelter and refuge from the prowling powers of darkness. Unseen, but very near, drawing ever nearer, Death and Destiny were advancing towards their prey. She held her husband's hand in both of hers, and horror, grief, and love struggled for supremacy.

"I say, Ethel!" He had released his hand and was stretching himself. "I nearly dropped asleep. Sing something to me. You've been neglecting your music, haven't you?"

She had torn out the handkerchief, and she spoke from behind it.

"I'll sing—if you wish it. But aren't you too tired? Won't it make your head ache?"

"No—please sing."

She seated herself at the piano, played a few bars, and began to sing.

"Good-bye, summer. Good-bye, goo—— Goo—— Goo——"

She had broken down completely. Bursting into hysterical tears, she came back to the sofa, flopped upon her knees, and flung her arms round him.

"Jack, my own Jack!" She was clinging and gasping and sobbing. "I—I can't bear it. Oh, I can't bear it. I shall go mad. Oh, stay with me——"

Then the drawing-room door opened. It was Lizzie, meaning to announce Dr. Arnold, but being pushed aside by the visitor in his hurry to enter.

"Mrs. Ingram, be calm. There is nothing to worry about. On my honour, it's all right. Ingram, may I speak to your wife by herself?"

She leaned her back against the bookcase in the study, and clung to a chair for further support. while Dr. Arnold explained the nature of the little mistake.

Dr. Haywarth, of Welbeck Street, had been telegraphing and telephoning, and finally had sent a special messenger to convey the right paper and recall the wrong one.

"Mrs. Ingram, do you understand? Nothing whatever to do with your husband—that paper which alarmed you so. No, it was a rough jotting for his case-book—not your husband's case at all—quite another patient, someone he had been seeing just before your

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"IT WAS LIZZIE, MEANING TO ANNOUNCE DR. ARNOLD, BUT BEING PUSHED ASIDE BY THE VISITOR IN HIS HURRY TO ENTER."

husband arrived. Haywarth is extremely sorry, but he inadvertently put this in with his letter to me, instead of the directions about your husband's diet. See now, this is the genuine article. 'Milk puddings; moderate use of tobacco.' There, you are feeling better. Smell these salts. Now let me take you back to Ingram."

But Ethel stopped the doctor outside the drawing-room door.

"Dr. Arnold, don't come in now. Come and see him to-morrow. Do you mind? I want to be alone with him."

And so that day love was born again in Baveno. And the love will last, because another child is to be given to them. A little creature with tentacles like starfish, groping and clutching—such infinitely fragile hands, yet strong enough to hold this man and this woman together till death does them part.

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MAY WYNNE.



MRS. STANLEY WRENCH.



MRS. ALFRED SIDGWICK.



ELINOR GLYN.





SOPHIE COLE.



MRS. ASKEW.



MAUDE ANNESLEY.



MAY EDGINTON.



MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON.



ADELAIDE ARNOLD.



MARJORIE BOWEN.



MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS.



"RITA."

The Sort of Man a Woman Likes.

A Symposium of the Opinions of Lady Novelists.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

"Tall, strong, and handsome, with intelligence beyond the average, yet with nothing alarming about him, good-humoured about trifles, jealous in matters of love—perhaps that is, after all, the type women really like best. It is sheer nonsense to say that women enjoy being tyrannized over. No doubt there are some that would rather be bullied than ignored. But the hectoring man is, with few exceptions, secretly detested. In so far as one can generalize (always a dangerous thing to do), it may be said that women like best a kind, clever man, who can be always trusted, and occasionally (if necessary) deceived."

From "Tenterhooks," by ADA LEVERSON.

WHAT particular qualities in man make him appear attractive to members of the opposite sex? In one of her latest novels, "Tenterhooks," the authoress, Ada Leverson, describes above "the sort of man that she considers women like best."

Is Mrs. Leverson's opinion correct? The question is one of such obvious interest to members of both sexes that we have collected the views of many other famous lady novelists on the query, "Is this the sort of man a woman really likes?"

MAUDE ANNESLEY.

How can one generalize? Our dear friend Jane seems perfectly content with her John, yet we look at each other and say, pityingly, "How *could* she have married him!"

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Chacune à son goût, and the *goût* varies so tremendously—luckily, or we should all be pining for the same type of man.

I agree with Mrs. Leverson that the hectoring man is not a favourite, as a rule, though even this rule has exceptions. I agree that kindness is important. But naturally, speaking for myself, I find the "attentive" man most soothing; neglect is the one unforgiveable sin. To my mind, personal appearance is immaterial. Tall or short, dark or fair, handsome or ugly, what does it matter? Surely one is attracted by personality, not white teeth or a fair moustache.

And what does the "man who can be always trusted" mean? To me it sounds very dull. The most lovable dog I ever had could never be trusted alone in the same room with chocolate *éclairs*.

I suppose nearly every woman admires muscular strength; it seems to be part of one's idea of the male thing. Yet even here there are exceptions. Who would not have loved Heine, for instance? As for a man I could "deceive," if I loved him I should not want to deceive him, and if I could deceive him I should not love him.

Well, being one of the vast crowd of women, here is the type I myself like: Personal appearance, unimportant; voice, very important; temper, hot, but not sulky; attentive in small matters; tactful; reliable; kind; good-natured; "pally"; strong; affectionate; intelligent—*of course*. And, oh! above all—he must have a sense of humour.



ADELAIDE ARNOLD.

On the whole Ada Leverson's clever sketch correctly represents "the sort of man women like best." Nevertheless, there are women to be found who prefer an ugly man with a soul to an Adonis without one; and, whilst all women detest a bully, there are many who secretly approve a master.

Broadly speaking, it is safe to say that a woman prefers "the sort of man" who most nearly accords with her individual ideal. To quote Hazlitt, she is most attracted by "an image familiar to the mind." And that the author of "Tenterhooks" has skilfully and correctly portrayed the Average Image in the mind of the Average Woman can scarcely be questioned.

MRS. ASKEW.

The sort of man women like best, I think, must be sufficiently good-looking to pass in a crowd, but the so-called handsome man I have no liking for at all. He must have kind eyes and a strong chin—nothing mean about his face. He must have the wisdom to understand children and be a true friend to dogs; dogs should come to him at once.

Naturally, I should prefer him to be clever, and I should like him to be well-read. I should detest a jealous man, also a coward. He must be generous and large-minded, and if he is a really strong man he would certainly be neither a bully nor a tyrant; he would be too wise. I should ask no questions about his past, and I should trust him utterly with regard to the future.

KATHARINE BATES.

I agree entirely with Ada Leverson when she says that women do not "enjoy being

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tyrannized over," and that "a hectoring man is, with few exceptions, secretly detested."

Moreover, a bully is generally a weak man who blusters because he cannot impress himself on his surroundings in any other way. Nine times out of ten the outwardly submissive wife of such a man has the stronger character of the two. In such cases he may pay the piper, but she calls the tune, and this generally by suggesting how much she would prefer some other tune to the one she intends should be played!

"A kind, clever man, who can always be trusted," is indeed a gift of the gods, but I cannot agree with Mrs. Leverson that women, *as a rule*, like husbands "who can be deceived." If a husband or father is "kind and clever," there is no necessity and no temptation to deceive him.

It is only the men who are hectoring bullies or stupid mules who are deceived by a sensible and truthful woman.

The wife who knows how to be *bon camarade*, and who has chosen her husband for the same inestimable quality, can let these underground tactics alone and preserve her self-respect. All relations in life—*a fortiori*, those between husband and wife—require *tact*, but surely tact need never spell deceit?

MARJORIE BOWEN.

It seems to me imposible for one woman to answer this interesting query, since each can only speak from her own feelings. Personally I think women *do* like to be tyrannized over, and that the one unforgiveable thing in women's eyes is weakness of the spirit. Physical weakness is to many unattractive. Neither do I think it fair to say women like a man they can deceive; I would sooner put "despise," not "like." The four most desirable qualities in a man would be, to my thinking, courage, intelligence, gaiety, and sympathy—and if you add sweetness and generosity you have perfection.

SOPHIE COLE.

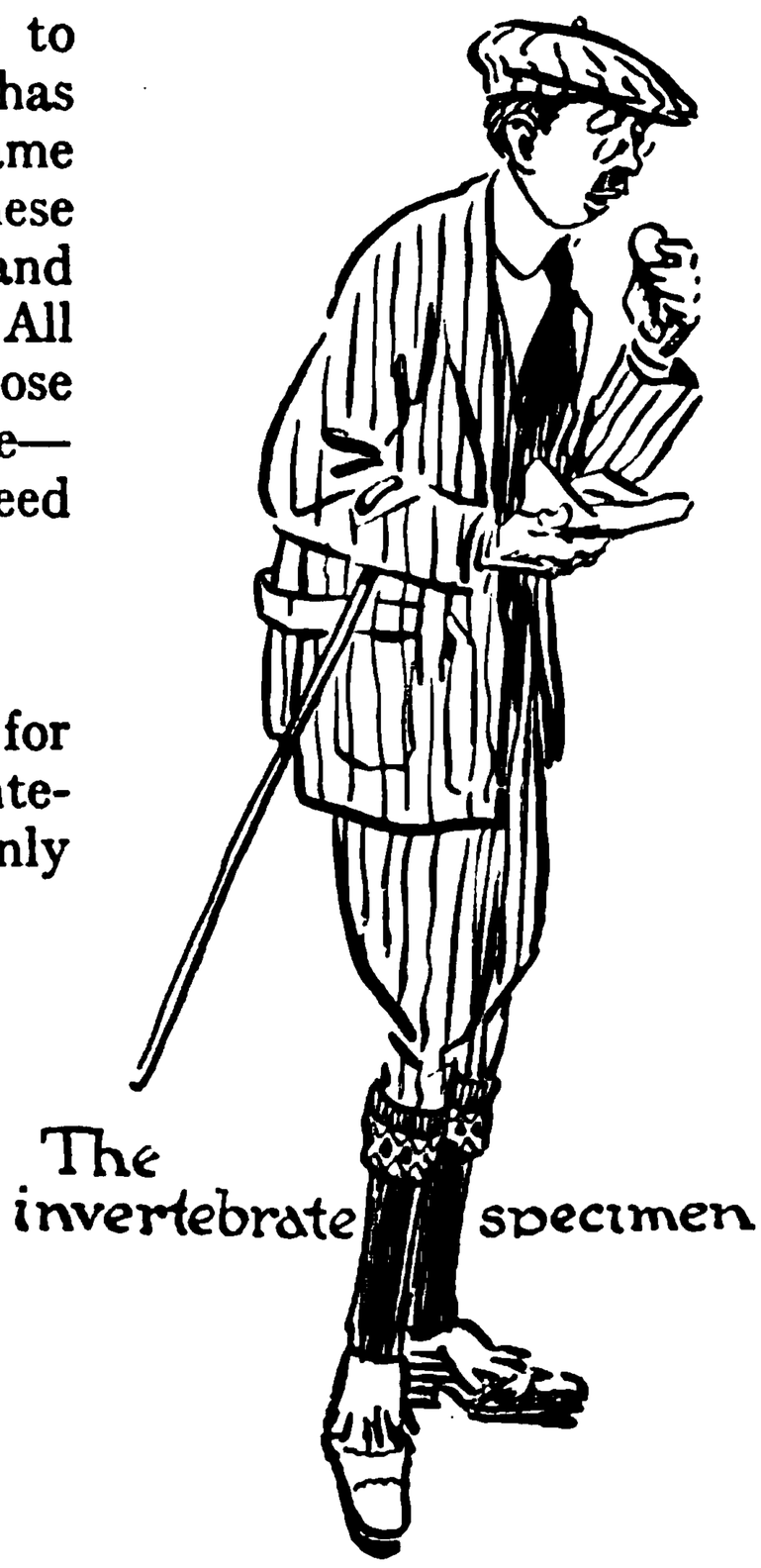
To say that women like men who are "tall, strong, and handsome, with intelligence above the average," is to say that they have a healthy preference for the best specimens of the race.

It is true that they admire these things in a man, just as they naturally prefer a man who is "good-humoured about those most important things, trifles." As to "being tyrannized over," I think they imagine they like it before marriage, and discover they detest it after.

Of course, it pleases them that a man should be "jealous." Not wishing to share their man with other women, they would not feel flattered at his readiness to share his woman with other men.

If they want a man who can "occasionally (if necessary) be deceived," they will not have far to look. The man has yet to be born who cannot be deceived by any woman who tries.

But there is one quality for which most women would barter any or all of the above-named graces in man — the quality of understanding. Tenderness is sometimes mistaken for it, but tenderness may exist without it. It is "understanding" which men and women have craved of each other since the time they were created, so dissimilar that the aspiration is impossible of fulfilment.



The invertebrate specimen

MRS. PHILIP CHAMPION DE CRESPIGNY.

Woman's fancy for the "masterful" man certainly died with the last century, though I am inclined to agree that they were always secretly detested. Now that we have learned to speak out, such men are openly flouted. There is a long step between him and the invertebrate specimen we none of us admire.

Chivalry—the real chivalry of the strong towards the weak—is the quality which perhaps appeals as much as any, and always can be found in the kind, clever man described by Ada Leverson, that woman could always trust, but whom, I hope, she would be *ashamed* to deceive.

MAY EDGINTON.

It is, indeed, as Mrs. Leverson says, dangerous to generalize, and never more so

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than in the case of a woman. Women cannot generalize. They are swamped by personality and individuals. Were one to ask a mature woman who had attained to a little philosophy—and no woman is mature or philosophic until she has been married a few years, or, perhaps, unmarried for a great many—to describe her ideal type of man, she would probably answer in Mrs. Leverson's words: "He should have intelligence beyond the average, yet with nothing alarming about him, be good-humoured about trifles, jealous in matters of love. A kind, clever man, who can be always trusted, and occasionally (if necessary) deceived." But these words are the fruit of mature judgment only—and cold judgment.

Whether a man is tall, strong, and handsome, or the reverse, matters very little. Women usually have a preference for men taller than themselves, but a man's personal appearance is a matter of small moment, unless he be absolutely repulsive.

What is of moment, however, to every woman is that her mate, when he finds her, should bring romance with him. She will go through fire and water for romance, and it never dies, even in the driest and hardest and most prosaic of women. She wants served up to her daily her little dish of romance, and the ingredients are of the simplest nature—a few words, a look, a kiss, a touch, a flower. It is a delicious dish, and no husband "with intelligence beyond the average" will forget it. Given this, he may be jealous in matters of love—very jealous. His wife will like it as long as he remains a lover.

For a happy woman must have a lover; and that, to me, seems the crux of the matter.



The most incredible creatures

ELINOR GLYN.

I do not think I have any definite opinion as to what sort of a man women like best. It always seems to me the sex is divided into two general types—the women who want to rule, and the women who want to be ruled. Each type naturally prefers a different sort of man. And while women keep the ideal of what they would prefer somewhere in their imagination, they succumb to the attractions of the most incredible creatures. But this is a great truth, that you can judge of the woman individually by the sort of man she attracts. Or I should say, the sort of *men* she attracts, because they are generally of the same type. Like draws like.

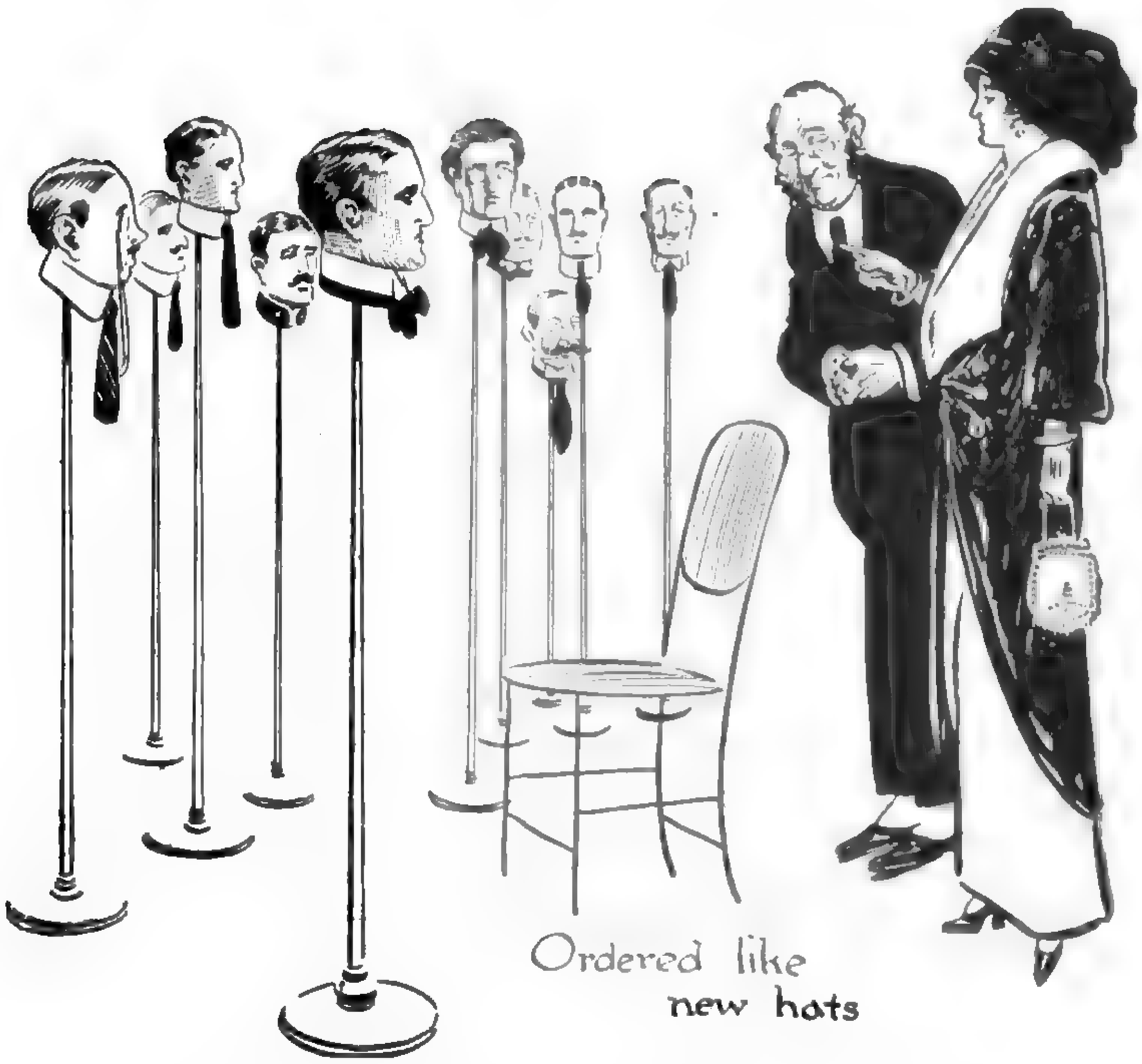
MRS. H. H. PENROSE.

The type of man described by Ada Leverson may very possibly be the type preferred by the average woman; but then the average woman has never been very exacting in her demands—perhaps owing to her melancholy preponderance in the marriage-market, which inclines her to take what she can get and be thankful for the moment. The cry of the time for divorce facilities would seem to prove that the thankfulness is not of a lasting nature.

If husbands could be ordered like new hats, doubtless every girl would stipulate that hers should be "tall, strong, and handsome." But when she really falls in love she sees the object of her infatuation as a perfect being, and would have nothing about him altered, even if he were small, fragile, and ugly; and it is a matter of common experience that some of the most fascinating men have neither height, strength, nor beauty of a physical kind to recommend them.

Only women who are weak-minded or lacking in self-respect permit themselves to be bullied, even as an alternative to being ignored. A man "jealous in matters of love" would be intolerable as a life-long companion; and one who could be "occasionally (if necessary) deceived" would not be worth the serious consideration of an intelligent woman.

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The things—besides love—that really matter, and should have most weight in affecting matrimonial choice, are sympathy, community of interests, good temper, that saving sense of humour which oils the wheels of life, making them pass with ease over rough places, and, lastly, if one may dare to say so, goodness and strength of character.

MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS.

Women differ in their tastes as widely as men. One woman likes one kind of man, and another woman another kind.

One knows, however, that there is a certain kind of man to whom many women are drawn—one hardly sees why—and a certain kind of woman who has a charm for men, the cause of which is a mystery to her own sex. I believe the fascinating quality to be exactly the same in both sexes. It consists in a certain cold-heartedness, a capacity for remaining quite detached from any feeling you have succeeded in arousing. The man who would succeed with many women must have the air of saying, "I can do perfectly well, not without women, but without *you* individually."

The capacity to love, unselfishly and well, is hardly ever found in the universally-admired person, male or female. This is because such a capacity absorbs the attention and interest, fixing it upon one object, and does not leave its possessor free to charm anybody who comes along.

If you think, through history, of the names of men who have been very successful with women, and women who have been admired by many men, you will find them to have been, almost without exception, selfish and cold.

"RITA" (MRS. D. HUMPHREYS).

In my opinion the sort of man women like best is a man with an object in life—strong, firm, and self-reliant. With just enough tenderness to love a woman for her own sake, with powers of sympathy and forbearance, and, above all, a good temper.

MRS. ALFRED SIDGWICK.

I must confess at once that I have no fault



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to find with Mrs. Ada Leverson's description of "the sort of man women like best." The only trouble is that he is scarce. I agree with her that, though women like strength, they do not like domestic tyrants.

As for the use of the word "deceive," it may mean anything, ugly or otherwise. Occasionally a woman has to tidy a man's room when his back is turned.

MRS. WILLIAMSON.

I think that we women like best, as a rule, the kind of man that we begin by thinking we should like least. One's ideal—all girls have him!—the tall, strong, silent, yet passionately adoring, soldierly person who invariably does the brave and perfect deeds without even stopping to think, would be so extremely tiresome to live with and live up to, that one generally "sheds" him out of one's secret heart when the real, imperfect, delightful, impossible-to-describe-or-understand man comes into one's life.

Yes, the great thing is, impossible to understand, because then one can never really come to the end of him, or tire. He's always new and interesting. But then, really, *all* men are impossible for women to understand. If we think we can, we are mistaken, and it would make for happiness, I'm sure, if we realized that there were always *depths* and heights which we could never quite know.

MRS. STANLEY WRENCH.

Strong? Yes, women adore strength, masculinity if you will, but the average woman doesn't care very much about looks, for the plainest, even the ugliest men are generally well-liked by womankind. The really handsome man is often a mere rag-bag of vanity, and women hate and secretly despise a man who is vain of his appearance.

Jealous in matters of love? Yes, and I believe in her secret heart woman likes to be tyrannized over, though never, even to herself, will she acknowledge this. If she is in love with him there is more of the Cave Woman in her than she imagines, but there is, too, much of the mother, and no matter how much she may look up to him, no matter how she may revel in his strength of arm and fine physique, there will be moments when she will realize he is only a grown-up boy after all. *That* is when she must deceive him, for he must never know that she has found this out. In my opinion, the man a woman likes best is cleverer than she, but doesn't know it, though she does; the masculine man who adores her for her feminine charm, but who, in spite of her femininity, treats her as a comrade, a chum.



MAY WYNNE.

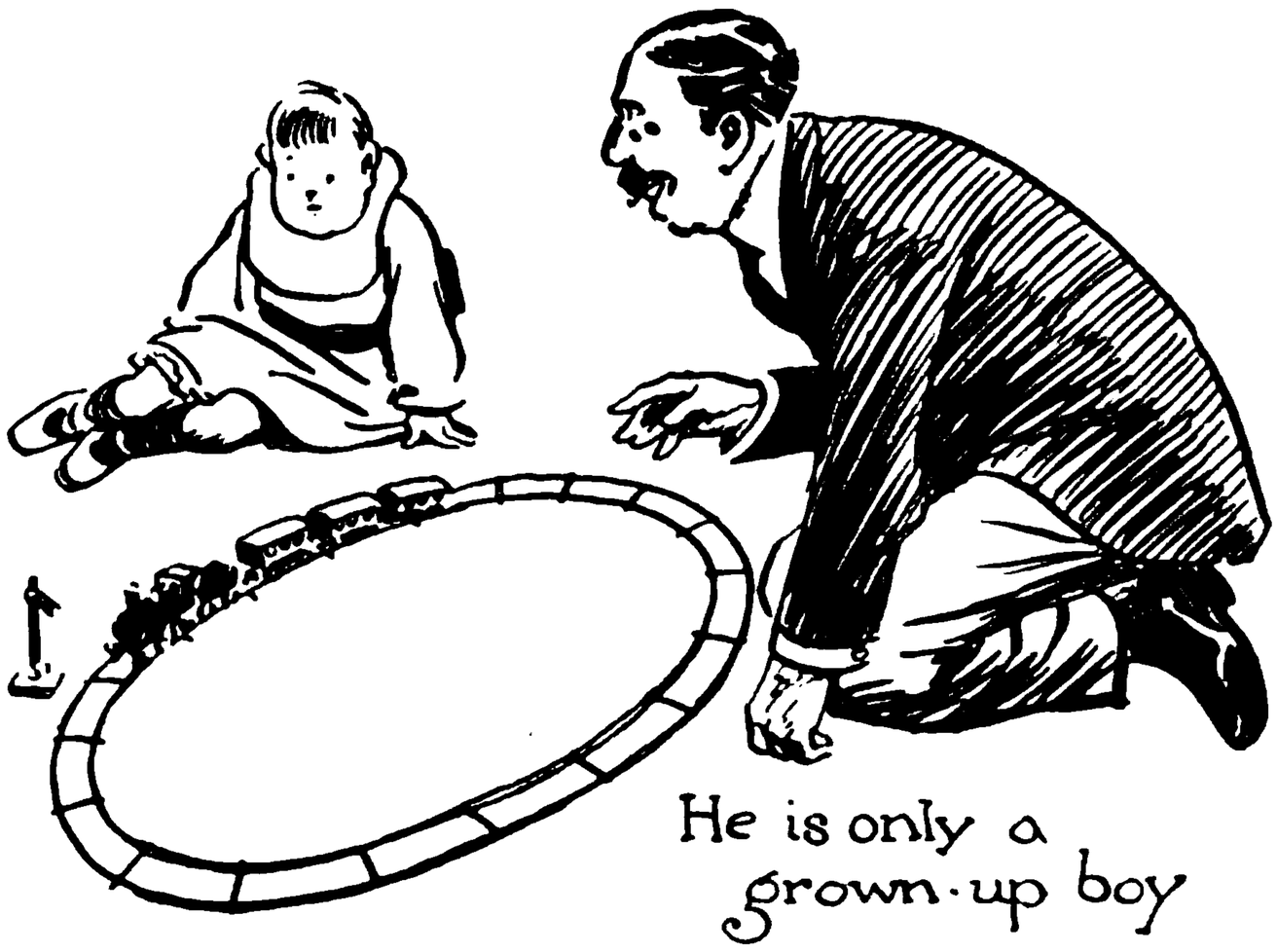
I quite agree with Mrs. Leverson's ideas as to the sort of man women like best, excepting with regard to looks. I don't think

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women are especially attracted by a handsome face, though I am sure they like size and strength. Also I doubt whether they admire actual cleverness as much as sound common sense—a characteristic which very clever people often conspicuously lack.

MAUD YARDLEY.

In my opinion the sort of man described in the extract from "Tenterhooks," by Ada Leverson, is not the sort of man women really like best.



His height and beauty would surely have very little to do with the affection that a woman worth the name would bestow upon him. As a friend, women like a man to be amusing, good-tempered, not too clever, and a man who possesses the art of making a woman feel that she is the most charming and the prettiest, and certainly the best-dressed, woman of his acquaintance. She will be quite content, for she will not remember—or believe—that he will make every woman think the same.

But as lover or husband, women like the man who is, no matter what his appearance, kind, tender, considerate—a man who is gentle to and fond of little children and dumb beasts.

The man a woman likes, or loves, she must surely be able to trust completely, and the man whom she can deceive she will certainly despise in her heart of hearts.



Mrs. Williamson, photo. by Lallie Charles. Mrs. Sidgwick, Miss Bowen, Mrs. Askew, by Elliott & Fry. Miss Annesley, by Mendelssohn. Adelaide Arnold, by Yates. Miss Cole, by Gabell. Mrs. Humphreys, by Bright's Studio. Mrs. Wrench, by Campbell Gray. Mrs. Glyn, by Dover Street Studios.

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Something to Worry About.



by P. G. Wodehouse.

Illustrated by Charles Crombie.

A GIRL stood on the shingle that fringes Millbourne Bay, gazing at the red roofs of the little village across the water. She was a pretty girl, small and trim. Just now some secret sorrow seemed to be troubling her, for on her forehead were wrinkles and in her eyes a look of wistfulness. She had, in fact, all the distinguishing marks of one who is thinking of her sailor lover.

But she was not. She had no sailor lover. What she was thinking of was that at about this time they would be lighting up the shop-windows in London, and that of all the deadly, depressing spots she had ever visited this village of Millbourne was the deadliest.

The evening shadows deepened. The incoming tide glistened oilily as it rolled over the mud flats. She rose and shivered.

"Goo! What a hole!" she said, eyeing the unconscious village morosely. "*What* a hole!"

This was Sally Preston's first evening in Millbourne. She had arrived by the afternoon train from London—not of her own free will. Left to herself, she would not have come within sixty miles of the place. London supplied all that she demanded from life. She had been born in London; she had lived there ever since—she hoped to die there. She liked fogs, motor-buses, noise, policemen, paper-boys, shops, taxi-cabs, artificial light, stone pavements, houses in long, grey rows, mud, banana-skins, and moving-picture exhibitions. Especially moving-picture exhibitions. It was, indeed, her taste for these that had caused her banishment to Millbourne.

The great public is not yet unanimous on the subject of moving-picture exhibitions. Sally, as I have said, approved of them. Her father, on the other hand, did not. An austere ex-butler, who let lodgings in Ebury Street and preached on Sundays in Hyde Park, he looked askance at the "movies." It was his boast that he had never been inside a theatre in his life, and he classed cinema palaces with theatres as wiles of the devil. Sally, suddenly unmasked as an habitual frequenter of these abandoned places, sprang with one bound into prominence as the Bad Girl of the Family. Instant removal from the range of temptation being the only possible plan, it seemed to Mr. Preston that a trip to the country was indicated.

He selected Millbourne because he had been butler at the Hall there, and because his sister Jane, who had been a parlour-maid at the Rectory, was now married and living in the village.

Certainly he could not have chosen a more

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promising reformatory for Sally. Here, if anywhere, might she forget the heady joys of the cinema. Tucked away in the corner of its little bay, which an accommodating island converts into a still lagoon, Millbourne lies dozing. In all sleepy Hampshire there is no sleepier spot. It is a place of calm-eyed men and drowsy dogs. Things crumble away and are not replaced. Tradesmen book orders, and then lose interest and forget to deliver the goods. Only centenarians die, and nobody worries about anything—or did not until Sally came and gave them something to worry about.

Next-door to Sally's Aunt Jane, in a cosy little cottage with a wonderful little garden, lived Thomas Kitchener, a large, grave, self-sufficing young man, who, by sheer application to work, had become already, though only twenty-five, second gardener at the Hall. Gardening absorbed him. When he was not working at the Hall he was working at home. On the morning following Sally's arrival, it being a Thursday and his day off, he was crouching in a constrained attitude in his garden, every fibre of his being concentrated on the interment of a plump young bulb. Consequently, when a chunk of mud came sailing over the fence, he did not notice it.

A second, however, compelled attention by bursting like a shell on the back of his neck. He looked up, startled. Nobody was in sight. He was puzzled. It could hardly be raining mud. Yet the alternative theory, that someone in the next garden was throwing it, was hardly less bizarre. The nature of his friendship with Sally's Aunt Jane and old Mr. Williams, her husband, was comfortable rather than rollicking. It was inconceivable that they should be flinging clods at him.

As he stood wondering whether he should go to the fence and look over, or simply accept the phenomenon as one of those things which no fellow can understand, there popped up before him the head and shoulders of a girl. Poised in her right hand was a third clod, which, seeing that there was now no need for its services, she allowed to fall to the ground.

"Halloa!" she said. "Good morning."

She was a pretty girl, small and trim. Tom was by way of being the strong, silent man with a career to think of and no time for bothering about girls, but he saw that. There was, moreover, a certain alertness in her expression rarely found in the feminine population of Millbourne, who were apt to be slightly bovine.

"What do you think *you're* messing about at?" she said, affably.

Tom was a slow-minded young man, who liked to have his thoughts well under control before he spoke. He was not one of your gay rattlers. Besides, there was something about this girl which confused him to an extraordinary extent. He was conscious of new and strange emotions. He stood staring silently.

"What's your name, anyway?"

He could answer that. He did so.

"Oh! Mine's Sally Preston. Mrs. Williams is my aunt. I've come from London."

Tom had no remarks to make about London.

"Have you lived here all your life?"

"Yes," said Tom.

"My goodness! Don't you ever feel fed up? Don't you want a change?"

Tom considered the point.

"No," he said.

"Well, *I* do. I want one now."

"It's a nice place," hazarded Tom.

"It's nothing of the sort. It's the beastliest hole in existence. It's absolutely chronic. Perhaps you wonder why I'm here. Don't think I *wanted* to come here. Not me! I was sent. It was like this." She gave him a rapid summary of her troubles. "There! Don't you call it a bit thick?" she concluded.

Tom considered this point, too.

"You must make the best of it," he said, at length.

"I won't! I'll make father take me back."

Tom considered this point also. Rarely, if ever, had he been given so many things to think about in one morning.

"How?" he inquired, at length.

"I don't know. I'll find some way. You see if I don't. I'll get away from here jolly quick, I give you *my* word."

Tom bent low over a rose-bush. His face was hidden, but the brown of his neck seemed to take on a richer hue, and his ears were undeniably crimson. His feet moved restlessly, and from his unseen mouth there proceeded the first gallant speech his lips had ever framed. Merely considered as a speech, it was, perhaps, nothing wonderful; but from Tom it was a miracle of chivalry and polish.

What he said was: "I hope not."

And instinct telling him that he had made his supreme effort, and that anything further must be bathos, he turned abruptly and stalked into his cottage, where he drank tea and ate bacon and thought chaotic thoughts. And when his appetite declined to carry him more than half-way through the third rasher, he understood. He was in love.

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These strong, silent men who mean to be head-gardeners before they are thirty, and eliminate woman from their lives as a dangerous obstacle to the successful career, pay a heavy penalty when they do fall in love. The average irresponsible young man who has hung about North Street on Saturday nights, walked through the meadows and round by the mill and back home past the creek on Sunday afternoons, taken his seat in the brake for the annual outing, shuffled his way through the polka at the tradesmen's ball, and generally seized all legitimate opportunities for sporting with Amaryllis in the shade, has a hundred advantages which your successful careerer lacks. There was hardly a moment during the days which followed when Tom did not regret his neglected education.

For he was not Sally's only victim in Millbourne. That was the trouble. Her beauty was not of that elusive type which steals imperceptibly into the vision of the rare connoisseur. It was sudden and compelling. It hit you. Bright brown eyes beneath a mass of fair hair, a determined little chin, a slim figure—these are disturbing things ; and the youths of peaceful Millbourne sat up and took notice as one youth. Throw your mind back to the last musical comedy you saw. Recall the leading lady's song with chorus of young men, all proffering devotion simultanequsly in a neat row ? Well, that was how the lads of the village comported themselves towards Sally.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams, till then a highly-esteemed but little-frequented couple, were astonished at the sudden influx of visitors. The cottage became practically a *salon*. There was not an evening when the little sitting-room looking out on the garden was not packed. It is true that the conversation lacked some of the sparkle generally found in the better class of *salon*. To be absolutely accurate, there was hardly any conversation. The youths of Millbourne were sturdy and honest. They were the backbone of England. England, in her hour of need, could have called upon them with the comfortable certainty that, unless they happened to be otherwise engaged, they would leap to her aid.

But they did not shine at small-talk. Conversationally they were a spent force after they had asked Mr. Williams how his rheumatism was. Thereafter they contented themselves with sitting massively about in corners, glowering at each other. Still, it was all very jolly and sociable, and helped to pass the long evenings. And, as Mrs. Williams pointed out, in reply to some rather strong remarks from Mr. Williams on the subject of packs of young fools who made it impossible for a man to get a quiet smoke in his own home, it kept them out of the public-houses.

Tom Kitchener, meanwhile, observed the invasion with growing dismay. Shyness barred him from the evening gatherings, and what was going on in that house, with young bloods like Ted Pringle, Albert Parsons, Arthur Brown, and Joe Blossom (to name four of the most assiduous) exercising their fascinations at close range, he did not like to think. Again and again he strove to brace himself up to join the feasts of reason and flows of soul which he knew were taking place nightly around the object of his devotions, but every time he failed. Habit is a terrible thing ; it shackles the strongest, and Tom had fallen into the habit of inquiring after Mr. Williams's rheumatism over the garden fence first thing in the morning.

It was a civil, neighbourly thing to do, but it annihilated the only excuse he could think of for looking in at night. He could not help himself. It was like some frightful scourge—the morphine habit, or something of that sort. Every morning he swore to himself that nothing should induce him to mention the subject of rheumatism, but no sooner had the stricken old gentleman's head appeared above the fence than out it came.

" Morning, Mr. Williams."

" Morning, Tom."

Pause, indicative of a strong man struggling with himself ; then :—

" How's the rheumatism, Mr. Williams ? "

" Better, thank'ee, Tom."

And there he was, with his guns spiked.

However, he did not give up. He brought to his wooing the same determination which had made him second gardener at the Hall at twenty-five. He was a novice at the game, but instinct told him that a good line of action was to shower gifts. He did so. All he had to shower was vegetables, and he showered them in a way that would have caused the goddess Ceres to be talked about. His garden became a perfect crater, erupting vegetables. Why vegetables ? I think I hear some heckler cry. Why not flowers—fresh, fair, fragrant flowers ? You can do a lot with flowers. Girls love them. There is poetry in them. And, what is more, there is a recognized language of flowers. Shoot in a rose, or a calceolaria, or an herbaceous border, or something, I gather, and you have made a formal proposal of marriage without any of the trouble of rehearsing a long speech and

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practising appropriate gestures in front of your bedroom looking-glass. Why, then, did not Thomas Kitchener give Sally Preston flowers? Well, you see, unfortunately it was now late autumn, and there were no flowers. Nature had temporarily exhausted her floral blessings, and was jogging along with potatoes and artichokes and things. Love is like that. It invariably comes just at the wrong time. A few months before there had been enough roses in Tom Kitchener's garden to win the hearts of a dozen girls. Now there were only vegetables. 'Twas ever thus.

It was not to be expected that a devotion so practically displayed should escape comment. This was supplied by that shrewd observer, old Mr. Williams. He spoke seriously to Tom across the fence on the subject of his passion.

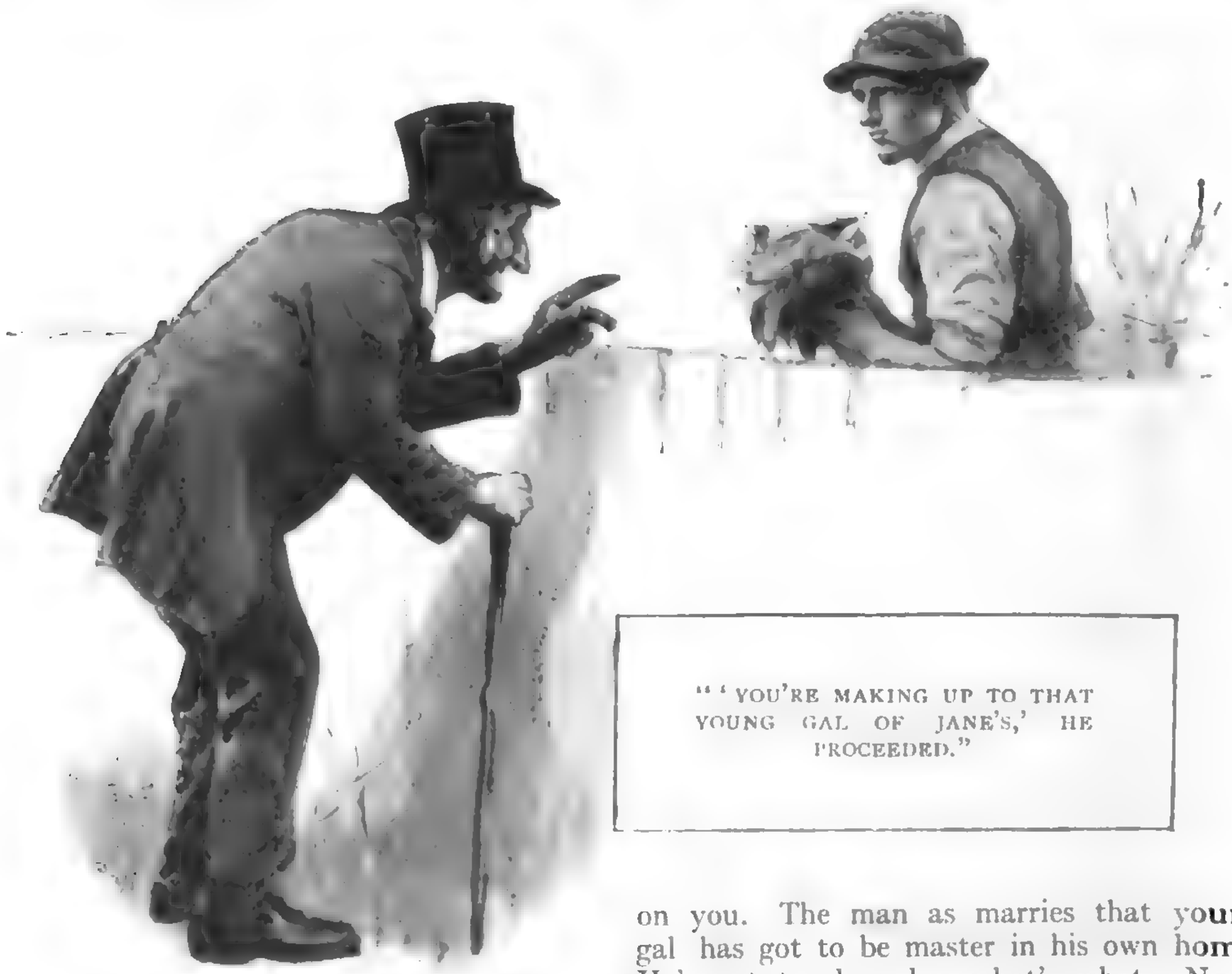
"Young Tom," he said, "drop it."

Tom muttered unintelligibly. Mr. Williams adjusted the top-hat without which he never stirred abroad, even into his garden. He blinked benevolently at Tom.

"You're making up to that young gal of Jane's," he proceeded. "You can't deceive *me*. All these p'taties, and what not. *I* seen your game fast enough. Just you drop it, young Tom."

"Why?" muttered Tom, rebelliously. A sudden distaste for old Mr. Williams blazed within him.

"Why? 'Cos you'll only burn your fingers if you don't, that's why. I been watching this young gal of Jane's, and I seen what sort of a young gal she be. She's a flipperty piece, that's what she be. You marry that young gal, Tom, and you'll never have no more quiet and happiness. She'd just take and turn the place upsy-down



"'YOU'RE MAKING UP TO THAT YOUNG GAL OF JANE'S,' HE PROCEEDED."

on you. The man as marries that young gal has got to be master in his own home. He's got to show her what's what. Now, you ain't got the devil in you to do that, Tom. You're what I might call a sort of a sheep. I admires it in you, Tom. I like to see a young man steady and quiet, same as what you be. So that's how it is, you see. Just you drop this foolishness, young Tom, and leave that young gal be, else you'll burn your fingers, same as what I say."

And, giving his top-hat a rakish tilt, the old gentleman ambled indoors, satisfied that he had dropped a guarded hint in a pleasant and tactful manner.

It is to be supposed that this interview stung Tom to swift action. Otherwise, one

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cannot explain why he should not have been just as reticent on the subject nearest his heart when bestowing on Sally the twenty-seventh cabbage as he had been when administering the hundred and sixtieth potato. At any rate, the fact remains that, as that fateful vegetable changed hands across the fence, something resembling a proposal of marriage did actually proceed from him. As a sustained piece of emotional prose it fell short of the highest standard. Most of it was lost at the back of his throat, and what did emerge was mainly inaudible. However, as she distinctly caught the word "love" twice, and as Tom was shuffling his feet and streaming with perspiration, and looking everywhere at once except at her, Sally grasped the situation. Whereupon, without any visible emotion, she accepted him.

Tom had to ask her to repeat her remark. He could not believe his luck. It is singular how diffident a normally self-confident man can become, once he is in love. When Colonel Milvery, of the Hall, had informed him of his promotion to the post of second gardener, Tom had demanded no *encore*. He knew his worth. He was perfectly aware that he was a good gardener, and official recognition of the fact left him gratified, but unperturbed. But this affair of Sally was quite another matter. It had revolutionized his standards of value—forced him to consider himself as a man, entirely apart from his skill as a gardener. And until this moment he had had grave doubt as to whether, apart from his skill as a gardener, he amounted to much.

He was overwhelmed. He kissed Sally across the fence humbly. Sally, for her part, seemed very unconcerned about it all. A more critical man than Thomas Kitchener might have said that, to all appearances, the thing rather bored Sally.

"Don't tell anybody just yet," she stipulated.

Tom would have given much to be allowed to announce his triumph defiantly to old Mr. Williams, to say nothing of making a considerable noise about it in the village; but her wish was law, and he reluctantly agreed.

There are moments in a man's life when, however enthusiastic a gardener he may be, his soul soars above vegetables. Tom's shot with a jerk into the animal kingdom. The first present he gave Sally in his capacity of *fiancé* was a dog.

It was a half-grown puppy with long legs and a long tail, belonging to no one species, but generously distributing itself among about six. Sally loved it, and took it with her wherever she went. And on one of these rambles down swooped Constable Cobb, the village policeman, pointing out that, contrary to regulations, the puppy had no collar.

It is possible that a judicious meekness on Sally's part might have averted disaster. Mr. Cobb was human, and Sally was looking particularly attractive that morning. Meekness, however, did not come easily to Sally. In a speech which began as argument and ended (Mr. Cobb proving stolid and unyielding) as pure cheek, she utterly routed the constable. But her victory was only a moral one, for as she turned to go Mr. Cobb, dull red and puffing slightly, was already entering particulars of the affair in his note-book, and Sally knew that the last word was with him.

On her way back she met Tom Kitchener. He was looking very tough and strong, and at the sight of him a half-formed idea, which she had regretfully dismissed as impracticable, of assaulting Constable Cobb, returned to her in an amended form. Tom did not know it, but the reason why she smiled so radiantly upon him at that moment was that she had just elected him to the post of hired assassin. While she did not want Constable Cobb actually assassinated, she earnestly desired him to have his helmet smashed down over his eyes; and it seemed to her that Tom was the man to do it.

She poured out her grievance to him and suggested her scheme. She even elaborated it.

"Why shouldn't you wait for him one night and throw him into the creek? It isn't deep, and it's jolly muddy."

"Um!" said Tom, doubtfully.

"It would just teach him," she pointed out.

But the prospect of undertaking the higher education of the police did not seem to appeal to Tom. In his heart he rather sympathized with Constable Cobb. He saw the police-man's point of view. It is all very well to talk, but when you are stationed in a sleepy village where no one ever murders, or robs, or commits arson, or even gets drunk and disorderly in the street, a puppy without a collar is simply a godsend. A man must look out for himself.

He tried to make this side of the question clear to Sally, but failed signally. She took a deplorable view of his attitude.

"I might have known you'd have been afraid," she said, with a contemptuous jerk of her chin. "Good morning."

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Tom flushed. He knew he had never been afraid of anything in his life, except her; but nevertheless the accusation stung. And as he was still afraid of her he stammered as he began to deny the charge.

"Oh, leave off!" said Sally, irritably. "Suck a lozenge."

"I'm not afraid," said Tom, condensing his remarks to their minimum as his only chance of being intelligible.

"You are."

"I'm not. It's just that I——"

A nasty gleam came into Sally's eyes. Her manner was haughty.

"It doesn't matter." She paused. "I've no doubt Ted Pringle will do what I want."

For all her contempt, she could not keep a touch of uneasiness from her eyes as she prepared to make her next remark. There was a look about Tom's set jaw which made her hesitate. But her temper had run away with her, and she went on.

"I am sure he will," she said. "When we became engaged he said that he would do anything for me."

There are some speeches that are such conversational knock-out blows that one can hardly believe that life will ever pick itself up and go on again after them. Yet it does. The dramatist brings down the curtain on such speeches. The novelist blocks his reader's path with a zareba of stars. But in life there are no curtains, no stars, nothing final and definite—only ragged pauses and discomfort. There was such a pause now.

"What do you mean?" said Tom, at last.

"You promised to marry me."

"I know I did—and I promised to marry Ted Pringle!"

That touch of panic which she could not wholly repress, the panic that comes to everyone when a situation has run away with them like a strange, unmanageable machine, infused a shade too much of the defiant into Sally's manner. She had wished to be cool, even casual, but she was beginning to be afraid. Why, she could not have said. Certainly she did not anticipate violence on Tom's part. Perhaps that was it. Perhaps it was just because he was so quiet that she was afraid. She had always looked on him contemptuously as an amiable, transparent lout, and now he was puzzling her. She got an impression of something formidable behind his stolidity, something that made her feel mean and insignificant.

She fought against the feeling, but it gripped her; and, in spite of herself, she found her voice growing shrill and out of control.

"I promised to marry Ted Pringle, and I promised to marry Joe Blossom, and I promised to marry Albert Parsons. And I was going to promise to marry Arthur Brown and anybody else who asked me. So now you know! I told you I'd make father take me back to London. Well, when he hears that I've promised to marry four different men, I bet he'll have me home by the first train."

She stopped. She had more to say, but she could not say it. She stood looking at him. And he looked at her. His face was grey and his mouth oddly twisted. Silence seemed to fall on the whole universe.

Sally was really afraid now, and she knew it. She was feeling very small and defenceless in an extremely alarming world. She could not have said what it was that had happened to her. She only knew that life had become of a sudden very vivid, and that her ideas as to what was amusing had undergone a striking change. A man's development is a slow and steady process of the years—a woman's a thing of an instant. In the silence which followed her words Sally had grown up.

Tom broke the silence.

"Is that true?" he said.

His voice made her start. He had spoken quietly, but there was a new note in it, strange to her. Just as she could not have said what it was that had happened to her, so now she could not have said what had happened to Tom. He, too, had changed, but how she did not know. Yet the explanation was simple. He also had, in a sense, grown up. He was no longer afraid of her.

He stood thinking. Hours seemed to pass.

"Come along!" he said, at last, and he began to move off down the road.

Sally followed. The possibility of refusing did not enter her mind.

"Where are you going?" she asked. It was unbearable, this silence.

He did not answer.

In this fashion, he leading, she following, they went down the road into a lane, and through a gate into a field. They passed into a second field, and as they did so Sally's heart gave a leap. Ted Pringle was there.

Ted Pringle was a big young man, bigger even than Tom Kitchener, and, like Tom, he was of silent habit. He eyed the little procession inquiringly, but spoke no word. There was a pause.

"Ted," said Tom, "there's been a mistake."

He stepped quickly to Sally's side, and the next moment he had swung her off her feet and kissed her.

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To the type of mind that Millbourne breeds actions speak louder than words, and Ted Pringle, who had gaped, gaped no more. He sprang forward, and Tom, pushing Sally aside, turned to meet him.

I cannot help feeling a little sorry for Ted Pringle. In the light of what happened, I could wish that it were possible to portray him as a hulking brute of evil appearance and worse morals—the sort of person concerning whom one could reflect comfortably that he deserved all he got. I should like to make him an unsympathetic character, over whose downfall the reader would gloat. But honesty compels me to own that Ted was a thoroughly decent young man in every way. He was a good citizen, a dutiful son, and would certainly have made an excellent husband. Furthermore, in the dispute on hand he had right on his side fully as much as Tom. The whole affair was one of those elemental clashings of man and man where the historian cannot sympathize with either side at the expense of the other, but must confine himself to a mere statement of what occurred. And, briefly, what occurred was that Tom, bringing to the fray a pent-up fury which his adversary had had no time to generate, fought Ted to a complete standstill in the space of two minutes and a half.

Sally had watched the proceedings, sick and horrified. She had never seen men fight before, and the terror of it overwhelmed her. Her vanity received no pleasant stimulation from the thought that it was for her sake that this storm had been let loose. For the moment her vanity was dead, stunned by collision with the realities. She found herself watching in a dream. She saw Ted fall, rise, fall again, and lie where he had fallen; and then she was aware that Tom was speaking.

"SALLY WATCHED THE PROCEEDINGS, SICK AND HORRIFIED."



"Come along!"

She hung back. Ted was lying very still. Gruesome ideas presented themselves. She had just accepted them as truth when Ted wriggled. He wriggled again. Then he sat up suddenly, looked at her with unseeing eyes, and said something in a thick voice. She gave a little sob of relief. It was ghastly, but not so ghastly as what she had been imagining.

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Somebody touched her arm. Tom was by her side, grim and formidable. He was wiping blood from his face.

"Come along!"

She followed him without a word. And presently, behold, in another field, whistling meditatively and regardless of impending ill, Albert Parsons.

In everything that he did Tom was a man of method. He did not depart from his chosen formula.

"Albert," he said, "there's been a mistake."

And Albert gaped, as Ted had gaped.

Tom kissed Sally with the gravity of one performing a ritual.

The uglinesses of life, as we grow accustomed to them, lose their power to shock, and there is no doubt that Sally looked with a different eye upon this second struggle. She was conscious of a thrill of excitement, very different from the shrinking horror which had seized her before. Her stunned vanity began to tingle into life again. The fight was raging furiously over the trampled turf, and quite suddenly, as she watched, she was aware that her heart was with Tom.

It was no longer two strange brutes fighting in a field. It was her man battling for her sake.

She desired overwhelmingly that he should win, that he should not be hurt, that he should sweep triumphantly over Albert Parsons as he had swept over Ted Pringle.

Unfortunately, it was evident, even to her, that he was being hurt, and that he was very far from sweeping triumphantly over Albert Parsons. He had not allowed himself time to recover from his first battle, and his blows were slow and weary. Albert, moreover, was made of sterner stuff than Ted. Though now a peaceful tender of cows, there had been a time in his hot youth when, travelling with a circus, he had fought, week in, week out, relays of just such rustic warriors as Tom. He knew their methods—their headlong rushes, their swinging blows. They were the merest commonplaces of life to him. He slipped Tom, he side-stepped Tom, he jabbed Tom; he did everything to Tom that a trained boxer can do to a reckless novice, except knock the fight out of him, until presently, through the sheer labour of hitting, he, too, grew weary.

Now, in the days when Albert Parsons had fought whole families of Toms in an evening, he had fought in rounds, with the boss holding the watch, and half-minute rests, and water to refresh him, and all orderly and proper. To-day there were no rounds, no rests, no water, and the peaceful tending of cows had caused flesh to grow where there had been only muscle. Tom's headlong rushes became less easy to side-step, his swinging blows more swift than the scientific counter that shot out to check them. As he tired Tom seemed to regain strength. The tide of the battle began to ebb. He clinched, and Tom threw him off. He feinted, and while he was feinting Tom was on him. It was the climax of the battle—the last rally. Down went Albert, and stayed down. Physically, he was not finished; but in his mind a question had framed itself—the question, "Was it worth it?"—and he was answering, "No." There were other girls in the world. No girl was worth all this trouble.

He did not rise.

"Come along!" said Tom.

He spoke thickly. His breath was coming in gasps. He was a terrible spectacle, but Sally was past the weaker emotions. She was back in the Stone Age, and her only feeling was one of passionate pride. She tried to speak. She struggled to put all she felt into words, but something kept her dumb, and she followed him in silence.

In the lane outside his cottage, down by the creek, Joe Blossom was clipping a hedge. The sound of footsteps made him turn.

He did not recognize Tom till he spoke.

"Joe, there's been a mistake," said Tom.

"Been a gunpowder explosion, more like," said Joe, a simple, practical man. "What you been doin' to your face?"

"She's going to marry me, Joe."

Joe eyed Sally inquiringly.

"Eh? You promised to marry *me*."

"She promised to marry all of us. You, me, Ted Pringle, and Albert Parsons."

"Promised—to—marry—all—of—us!"

"That's where the mistake was. She's only going to marry me. I—I've arranged it with Ted and Albert, and now I've come to explain to you, Joe."

"You promised to marry——!"

The colossal nature of Sally's deceit was plainly troubling Joe Blossom. He expelled his breath in a long note of amazement. Then he summed up.

"Why, you're nothing more nor less than a Joshua!"

The years that had passed since Joe had attended the village Sunday-school had weakened his once easy familiarity with the characters of the Old Testament. It is possible that he had somebody else in his mind.

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Tom stuck doggedly to his point.

"You can't marry her, Joe."

Joe Blossom raised his shears and clipped a protruding branch. The point under discussion seemed to have ceased to interest him.

"Who wants to?" he said. "Good riddance!"

They went down the lane. Silence still brooded over them. The words she wanted continued to evade her.



"'YOU CAN'T MARRY HER, JOE.' 'WHO WANTS TO?' HE SAID. 'GOOD RIDDANCE!'"

They came to a grassy bank. Tom sat down. He was feeling unutterably tired.

"Tom!"

He looked up. His mind was working dizzily.

"You're going to marry me," he muttered.

She sat down beside him.

"I know," she said. "Tom, dear, lay your head on my lap and go to sleep."

If this story proves anything (beyond the advantage of being in good training when you fight), it proves that you cannot get away from the moving pictures even in a place like Millbourne; for as Sally sat there, nursing Tom, it suddenly struck her that this was the very situation with which that "Romance of the Middle Ages" film ended. You know the one I mean. Sir Percivale Ye Something (which has slipped my memory for the moment) goes out after the Holy Grail; meets damsel in distress; overcomes her persecutors; rescues her; gets wounded, and is nursed back to life in her arms. Sally had seen it a dozen times. And every time she had reflected sadly that the days of romance are dead, and that that sort of thing can't happen nowadays.

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My Reminiscences.

By ARNOLD BENNETT

Illustrated by H. M. Brock, R.I.



I.

ABOUT ten years ago I published a book of reminiscences, very angrily received by critics and very coldly by the public, which comprised nearly all that I cared to say concerning myself from my cradle up to about the time when I left England for France. As I cannot advantageously repeat myself, it follows that now I must begin at the point where the book left off—namely, my rebirth (for the phenomenon amounted to a rebirth) in Paris. By the way, there were perhaps two good reasons for the failure of the book. In the first place, it contained, so far as I remember, not a single word about men of genius, celebrities, notorieties, criminals, or sportsmen. In the second place, its frankness about its author was disconcerting, and even annoying, to many people. I fear that these two characteristics will always attach to whatever reminiscences I may write. I insist on living a quiet life, and hence, in the matter of gossip, I could not compete with the great mongers of the market; nor should I ever care to relate the doings and sayings and peculiarities of my friends and acquaintances. As for candour, I believe in it. And I wish there was more of it in England.

When one looks back one sees that certain threads run through one's life, making a sort of pattern in it. These threads and the nature of the pattern are not perceived until long after the actual events constituting them. I now see that there has been a French thread through my life. Of its origin I can form no idea, for neither my forbears nor the friends of my youth displayed the slightest interest in France or the French. Yet when I was eighteen or nineteen, and a clerk in my father's law office in the Five Towns, I used to spend my money on French novels—in English translations.

I was obliged to be content with English translations, because I could not read French without a dictionary, a book of idioms, and intense weariness. I had been studying French almost daily for nine years. I had passed the London Matriculation in French—and let me say that the London Matriculation French paper is, or was, among the silliest and most futile absurdities that the perverse, unimaginative craftiness of the pedagogic mind ever invented. I knew an immense

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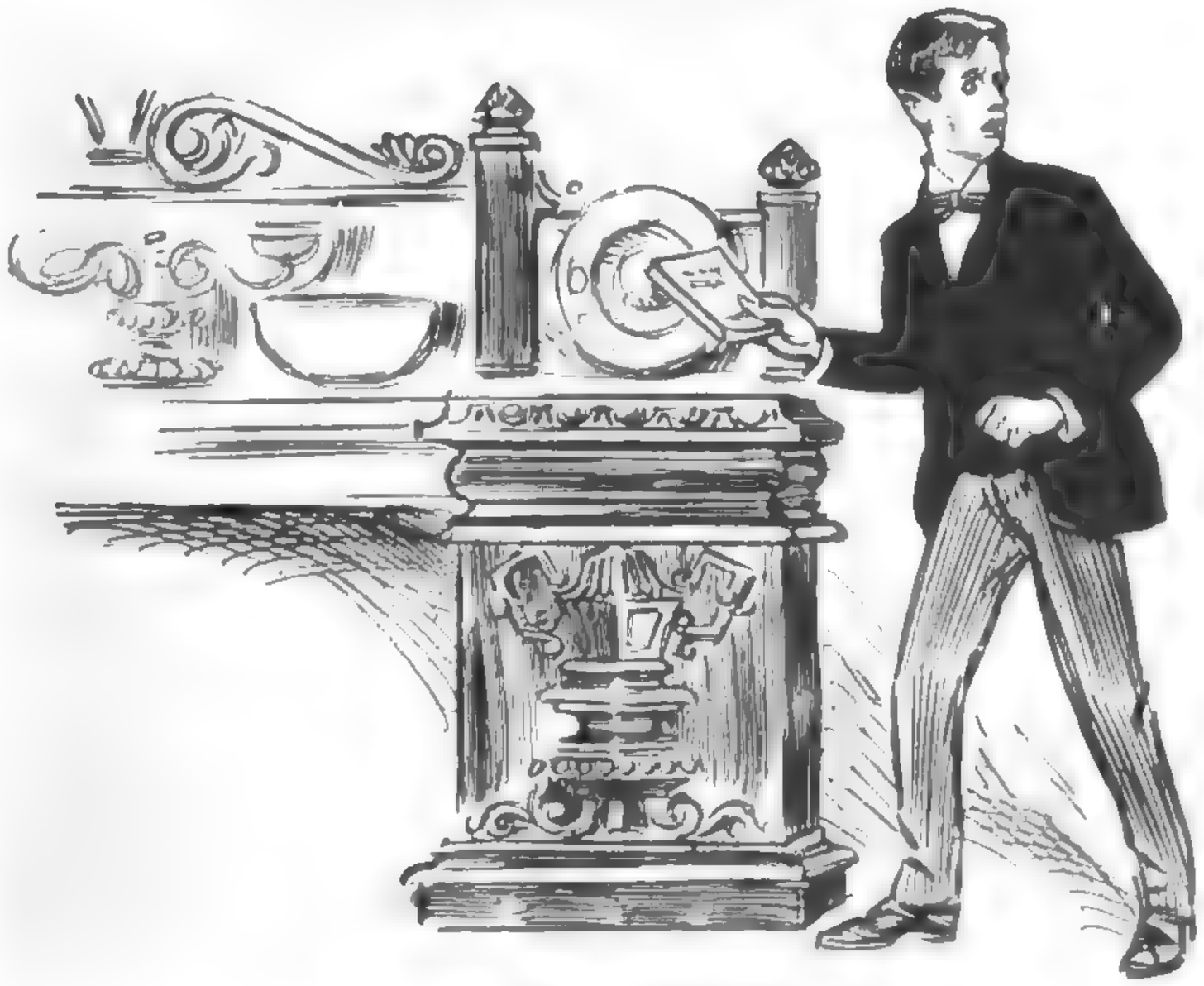
amount of French grammar. And all my labour was, in practice, utterly useless. In such wise are living languages taught on this island.

Nevertheless, I deeply enjoyed these secret contacts with French thought and manners, as revealed in French novels. The risks I had to run in order to procure them were terrific. Talk about leading a double life under the parental roof! I had no need to inquire whether modern French novels would be permitted at home. I very well knew that they would not. Victor Hugo alone would have been permitted, and him I had already gulped down in three huge doses. Still, my father was a very broad-minded man for his epoch and situation. But there are limits—anyhow, in the Five Towns!

I used to order these perilous works from a bookseller who was not the official family bookseller; and I used to say to him, as casually as I could: "Don't send it up; I'll call for it." One Saturday afternoon I reached home earlier than my father. This was a wonder, for it was no part of my business to leave the office before the head thereof. I was supposed to remain at the office until he had thought fit to go, and then to follow him at a decent interval. However, on that day I preceded him. Going into the dining-room, I saw on the corner of the sideboard nearest the door — exactly where my father's parcels and letters were put to await him —a translation of a novel by Paul Bourget which I had ordered. I have never been more startled than I was in that instant. The mere thought of the danger I was courting overwhelmed me. I snatched the volume and ran upstairs with it; it might have been a bomb of which the fuse was lighted. At the same moment I heard on the glass panel of the front door the peculiar metallic rap which my father made with his ringed finger. (He would never carry a latch-key.) Heaven had deigned to save me! Distinguished as Paul Bourget is, respectable as he is, there would have been an enormous and disastrous shindy over his novel had my father seen it. Whether the bookseller had sinned through carelessness, or whether, suspecting that I was ultimately bound for the inferno of Paris, he had basely hoped to betray me to my father, I do not know. But I think the kindest thing I can, though to send forth a French novel without concealing it in brown paper was perfectly inexcusable at that period in the Five Towns.

Later I seemed to lose interest in French literature. It was not until I had been in London for a year or two that I turned towards it again. I remember making the delightful discovery that a French novel could, after all, be read in the original without a dictionary, provided one was content with a somewhat vague idea of the sense. The first French book I ever read in this way was Daudet's "Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné." I was then about twenty-three or twenty-four. Thenceforward I never ceased to read French, and, by a well-known mental process, I was continually learning the meaning of new words and phrases without consulting the dictionary. I used to buy a French newspaper nearly every day at a shop in Coventry Street. What I made of it all I cannot now conceive. Gradually the legend grew up around me that I was an authority on French literature, and when I became a reviewer French books were very frequently sent to me for criticism, because of my alleged special competence. I would go to French plays in London. When indiscreet persons demanded, "But do you understand?" I would reply, "Not all, of course." It was the truth; I did not understand all. It was also in essence a dreadful lie, for I understood nothing.

I snatched the volume

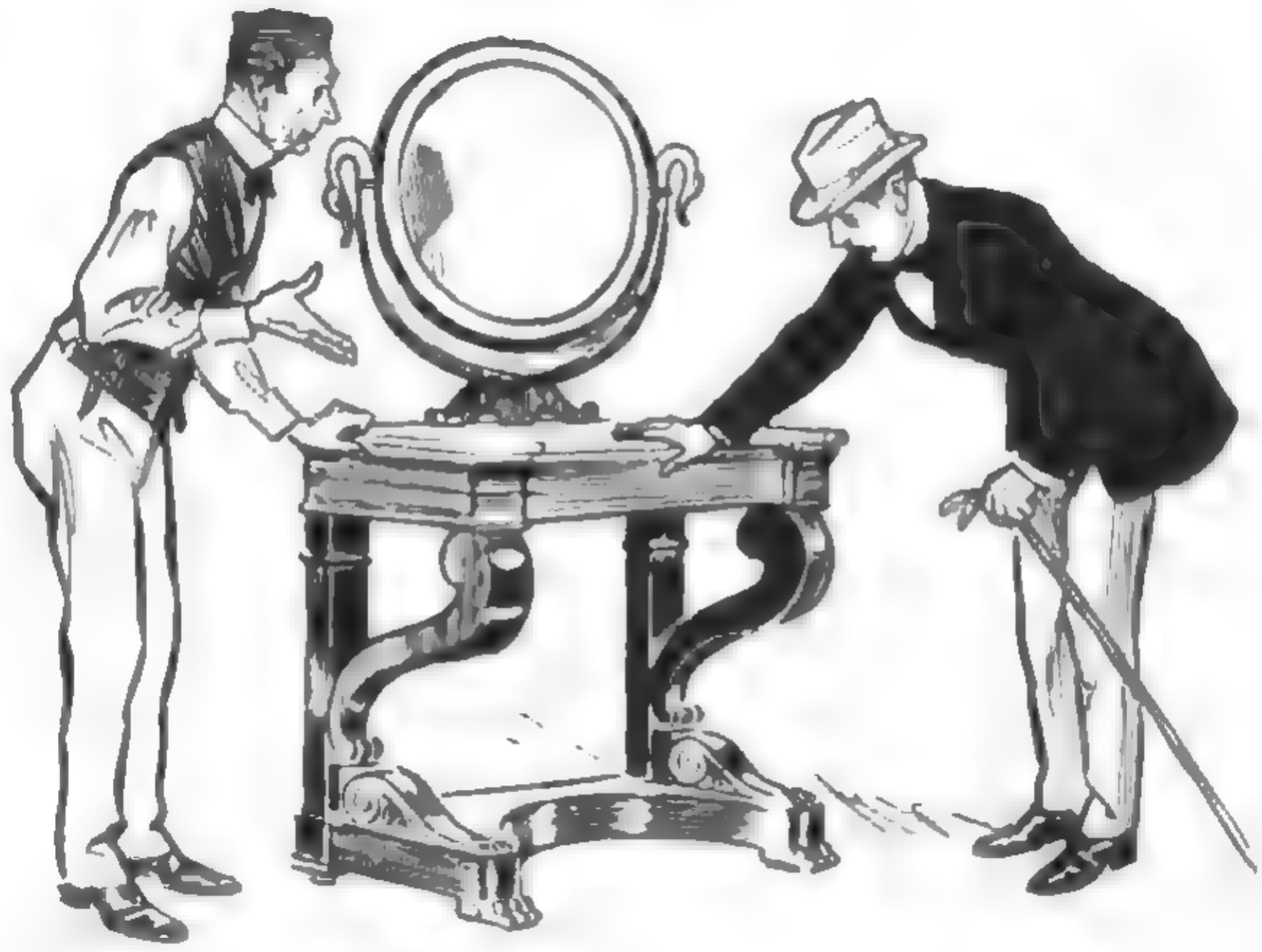


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Strange detail: I began to take private lessons in German (in which language also I had satisfied the University of London). I chose German because I thought I knew enough French! Another strange detail: I used often to say to my friends, "As soon as I am free enough I shall go and live in Paris." And yet I had no hope whatever of being able to go to Paris as a resident. I doubt if I had any genuine intention of going. But it was my habit to make such idle forecasts and boasts; seemingly they convinced everybody but me. I think now that something subconscious must have prompted them. They have all been justified by events. Chance, of course, has aided. Thus, from about the age of twenty-five onwards I used to say, "I shall marry at forty." I had absolutely no ground of personal conviction for this prophecy. But, by a sheer accident, I did happen to marry just at forty. And everyone, impressed, went about remarking, "He always does what he says he'll do."

A beautiful dressing-table for three pounds!



Similarly, I did go to live in Paris. A remarkable group of circumstances left me free from all local ties to earn my living where I chose. I was then thirty-five. Did I fly straight to Paris? Not a bit. I could not decide what to do. I went to Algeria first. On my way home I lingered in Paris. I question if I was very powerfully drawn towards Paris at the moment. I had to come to England to fulfil a social engagement, and then I returned to Paris for a few days, with the notion of establishing myself at Tours for a year or two, to "perfect" my French. I remained in Paris for five years, and in France for over nine years, liking and comprehending the French more and more, and feeling more and more at home among them, until now I do believe I have a kind of double mentality—one English and the other French. Naturally, when I settled in Paris, all my friends said again, "He always said he would do it, and he has done it." My reputation as a man of his word was made indestructible. But to me the affair presents itself as chiefly accidental.

I had awful difficulties with the language. Somehow, very illogically, I thought that the mere fact of residence in Paris would mysteriously increase my knowledge of the French tongue to a respectable degree. I remember that I was advised to haunt the theatre if I wished to "perfect" my French. The first play I saw was Edmond Sée's "L'Indiscret," at the Théâtre Antoine. I entered the theatre hoping for the best. I had read the play in advance. I did not, however, succeed in comprehending one single spoken word—not one. I had been studying French for nearly twenty-six years. The man in me who had written scores of "authoritative" articles on French literature was deeply humiliated. I at once arranged to take lessons. Three or four nights a week I was to be seen in the first row of the stalls (so as to hear well) of the little *théâtres de quartier* round about Montmartre. I seemed to make no progress for six months. Then, enchantingly, I began to understand bits of phrases heard in the street. I had turned the corner! Heavenly moment!

II.

THE world revolves very rapidly under its appearance of stability.

Only yesterday it seems that I was settling in Paris. And yet then I could buy Empire chairs (*croisées*) at sixteen shillings apiece; I could buy an Empire bedstead for a couple of pounds, and a beautiful dressing-table, whose mirror was supported by the curved necks of the Imperial swans, for three pounds! If I went to Paris now and asked dealers for Empire furniture at such prices, I should be classed as a lunatic. I had lived in an hotel overlooking the Seine for some time, and I was taking possession of a flat and furnishing it. I chose the Empire style for the furniture because I wanted a French style, and the Empire was the only style within the means

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of a man who had to earn his living by realistic fiction. Louis Quinze and Louis Seize are not for writers; neither is Empire, any more!

To acquire some real comprehension of a nation's character it is necessary to fit out a home in its capital. The process brings you at once into direct contact with the very spirit of the race. Especially in the big shops, which are so racy a feature of Paris life, do you encounter the French spirit, traditions, and idiosyncrasy. At some of the big shops you can buy everything that makes a home—except, of course, the second-hand. But you must not traverse the immemorial customs of home-making in France. Try to depart from the rule, even as to servants' aprons, and you will soon see that mysterious powers and influences are arrayed against you. The Republic itself stands before you in the shape of the shop-assistant. France is a land of suave uniformity. It is also at once the paradise and the inferno of bureaucracy. There the bureaucracy is underworked and underpaid. All which has been said before, uncountably often. Every Englishman is aware of it. And yet no Englishman is truly aware of it who has not set up a home in France.

"Ah! So you want the gas turned on!"



For example, I wanted the gas to be turned on in my flat. A simple affair! Drop a postcard to the company telling the company to come and turn it on? Not at all! I was told that it would be better to call upon the company. So I called.

"What do you desire, monsieur?"

"I am the new tenant of a flat, and I want the gas turned on."

"Ah! You are the new tenant of a flat, and you want the gas turned on. M. Chose, here is the new tenant of a flat, and he wants the gas turned on. Where should he be led to?"

About a quarter of an hour of this, and then at last I am led by a municipal employé sure of his job and of his pension to the far-distant room of the higher employé appointed by the City of Paris to deal with such as me. This room is furnished somewhat like that of a solicitor's managing clerk.

"Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, sir."

"It appears, sir—M. Bennay, fourth floor, No. 4, Rue de Calais, sixth arrondissement, is it not?—that you want the gas turned on. Will you put yourself to the trouble of sitting down, M. Bennay?"

I sit down. He sits down.

"Ah! So you want the gas turned on! Let us see, let us see——"

Hundreds of such applications must be made every day. But the attitude of this ceremonious official might be put into words thus: "A strange and interesting application of yours—to have the gas turned on! Very remarkable! It attracts me. The case must be examined with the care and the respect which it deserves."

The next moment the official astonishingly rises and informs me that the papers will arrive in due course. I depart. The papers do arrive in due course, papers of all colours and all complexities. One or two tips, and I get the gas. Electricity was not so easy. The Treaty of Berlin did not demand more negotiations and diplomacy than my electricity.

On the other hand, I had no trouble with the police. Every foreign resident must report himself to the police and get a permit to exist. The machine for preventing the unwelcome from existing in France is a beautiful bit of engineering. I ignored the police, and just went on existing. Nothing happened. Yet sundry men must have been bringing up families and providing dowries for their daughters on salaries which they received for duties which included looking after me.

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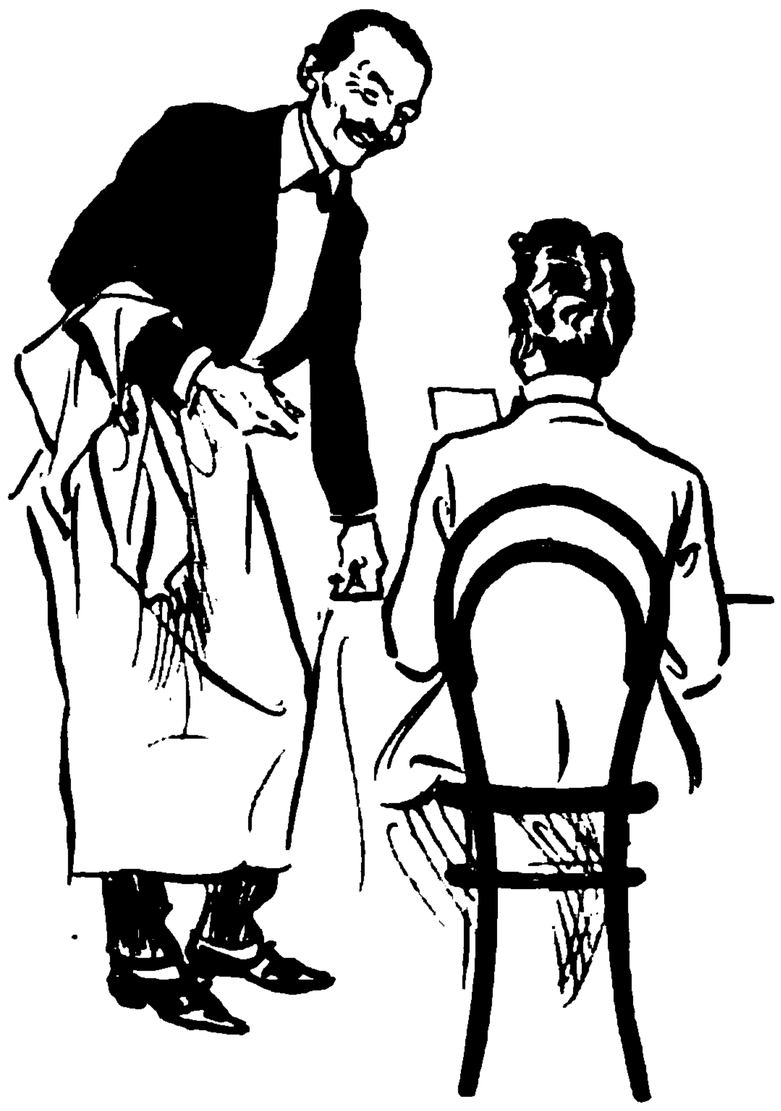
I said that it was necessary to fit out a home in a country in order to comprehend the national character. Perhaps that is not enough. You must get married in that country. Let none say that he knows his Paris until he has persuaded the mayor of some arrondissement to unite him in matrimony to a woman. By the time the ceremony is over and the certificate issued he will be a genuine expert in the niceties of the French temperament.

III.

WHEN from London I look back at Paris, I always see the streets —such as the Rue Notre Dame de Lorette, the Rue des Martyrs, the Rue Fontaine, and the Rue d'Aumale (one of the most truly Parisian streets in Paris) — which lie on the steep slope between the Rue de Châteaudun and the exterior boulevard where Montmartre begins. Though I have lived in various quarters of Paris and on both banks of the Seine, it is to these streets that my memory ever returns. And though I lived for many years in London, no London street makes the same friendly and intimate appeal to me as these simple middle-class streets of little shops and flats over the shops, with little restaurants, little *cafés*, and little theatres here and there at the corners.

The morning life of these streets was delightful, with the hatless women and girls shopping, and the tradesmen—and, above all, the tradeswomen—polite and firm at their counters, and the vast omnibuses scrambling up or thundering down, and the placid customers in the *cafés*. The waiters in the *cafés* and restaurants were human; they are inhuman in London. The *concierges* of both sexes were fiends, but they were human fiends. There was everywhere a strange mixture of French industry (which is tremendous) and French nonchalance (which is charmingly awful). Virtue and wickedness were equally apparent and equally candid. Hypocrisy alone was absent. I could find more intellectual honesty within a mile of the Rue d'Aumale than in the whole of England. And, more than anything whatever, I prize intellectual honesty.

The waiters in the cafés and restaurants were human



And then the glimpses of domestic life in the serried flats, poised storey beyond storey upon butchers' and grocers' and confectioners' and music-dealers' and repairers' and drapers' and corset-makers' and walking-stick-makers' and "bazaars"! Thousands of half-visible interiors within ten minutes' walk! And the intense mystery that enwrapped one's own house, reposing in the immense discretion of the *concierge*—who, by the way, was not a fiend. I never knew anything about the prodigiously genteel house of which I rented a fragment in the Rue de Calais, except that a retired opera singer lived over my head, and a pianoforte professor at the Conservatoire somewhere under my feet. I never saw either of them, but I knew that the ex-opera singer received about a yard of bread every morning, and one and a half litres of milk.

Every afternoon and sometimes in the evening a distant violin used to play, very badly, six bars—no more—of an air of Verdi's over and over again; never any other tune! The sound was too faint to annoy me, but it was the most melancholy thing I have ever heard. This phenomenon persisted for years, and I never discovered its origin, though I inquired again and again. Some interior, some existence of an infinite monotonous sadness, was just at hand, and yet hidden away from me, inviolate. Whenever I hear that air now I am instantly in Paris, and as near being sentimental as ever I shall be. The secret life of cities is a matter for endless brooding.

My ambition had long been to inhabit the Rue d'Aumale—austere, silent, distinguished, icy, and beautiful—and by hazard I did ultimately obtain a flat there, and so left the Rue de Calais. I tell you, I missed the undiscoverable and tragic violin of the Rue de Calais. To this day the souvenir of it will invariably fold me in a delicious spleen.

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IV.

THE sole disadvantage of the ability to take an equal delight in town life and in country life is that one is seldom content where one happens to be. Just when I was fully established in my ideal Parisian street I became conscious of a powerful desire to go and live in the French provinces. And I went. I sacrificed my flat and departed — in order to learn about the avarice, the laboriousness, the political independence, and the tranquil charm of the French peasant, and about the scorn which the countryside has for Paris, and about certain rivers and forests of France, and about the high roads and the inns thereon, and what the commercial travellers say to one another of a night in those excellent inns; in short, to understand a little the fabric of the backbone of France.

I often desired to be back again in Paris, and, of course, in the end I came back. And then I had the delightful sensation of coming back to the city, not as a stranger, but as one versed in its deviousness. I was able to take up at once the threads which I had dropped, without any of the drudgery and tedium incident to one's first social studies of a foreign capital. I was immediately at home, and I never felt more satisfaction in my citizenship of Paris than at this period. It was also at this period that I carried my Parisianism as far as I am ever likely to carry it.

After an interval of a quarter of a century, I had resumed, by some caprice, my early practice in water-colour painting. One of my school-girlish productions hung framed in the dining-room of a Parisian friend, whose taste was, at any rate in this instance, unduly influenced by his affections, but who had a large and intimate acquaintance among the most modern French artists — by which I mean among the school known in England as the Post Impressionists, the school which was guffawed at last year in England, was treated with marked respect by the *Times* this year, and which in a few years more will be worshipped in England as ignorantly as it is now condemned. I had a particular admiration for the water-colours of a leader of this school, and I told my friend I should like to meet my hero. Nothing easier! We met without delay at a lunch. Before the lunch I had said to my friend: "On no account let him see my water-colour."

My friend answered: "I shall most assuredly show him your water-colour."

I pretended to be desolated; but naturally, with the naive hopefulness of the rank amateur, I was secretly pleased. My hero was led to my water-colour, and gazed thereat with indifferent disapproval.

"Monsieur," he said to me, "you have three times too much cleverness, and your work is utterly without interest."

It is scarcely credible, but I felt flattered.





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I was enchanted to find that I had three times too much cleverness. My hero and I grew friendly. I visited his studio. We discussed art.

"The only advice I can offer to you," he said, "is to wait until you are conscious of an emotion before an object, and then paint what you feel."

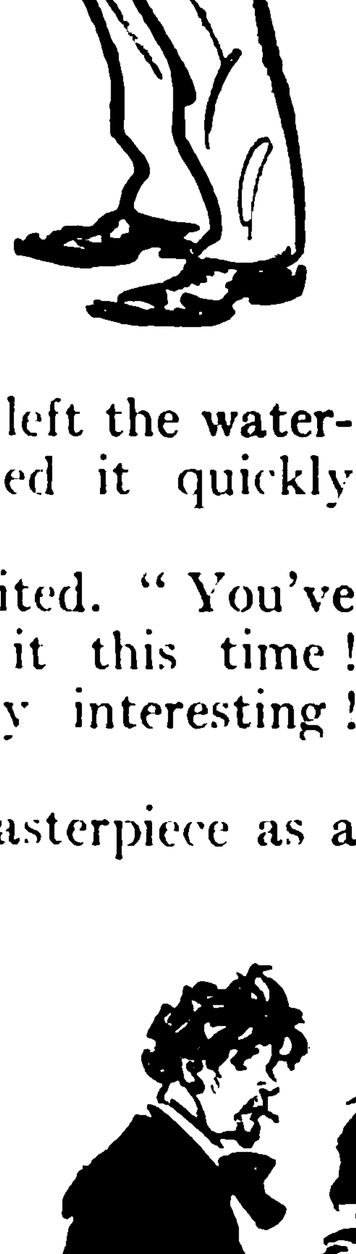
Shortly afterwards I happened to be conscious of an emotion before an object—namely, the courtyard of the old house where I was living. So I painted what I felt one December afternoon. I then invited my hero to lunch, and left the water-colour lying about. He spied it quickly enough.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he cried, excited. "You've done it! Oh, you've done it this time! *Très bien! Très bien!* Very interesting! Veritably interesting!"

(I should have kept this masterpiece as a sort of milestone in my swift career as a Post Impressionist, had not one of my American publishers caught sight of it and walked off with it, unintimidated by its post-impressionism. "I shall use this as a 'jacket' [paper covering] for one of your books," he said. And he did. He had it reproduced in colours, and calmly placed it on the bookstalls of the United States. I learnt afterwards that it was considered by trade experts as among the best commercial "jackets" of its season. Such can be the fruits of an emotion!)

My hero suggested that if I wished to take painting seriously I might attend the Post Impressionist academy of which he was a professor. I was afraid; but, being ashamed of my timidity, I said I would go with the greatest pleasure. He took me. I entered the large studio under his majestic ægis as his *protégé*. It was a fearful moment. I was ten times more nervous than I have ever been when called before the curtain of a theatre. I trembled, literally. It seemed absurd that I, a school-girlish amateur, should be there in that most modern of Parisian studios as a serious student of art. However, I had burnt my boats. I had to summon my manhood and begin a charcoal drawing of the model, a young Italian girl. I scarcely knew what I was doing. I glanced surreptitiously at the other students—about a dozen or so. The other students glanced surreptitiously at me. They were all young, extraordinarily young when compared to myself. I knew then that I was middle-aged.

At the second "rest" I persuaded myself that it was absurd to be discountenanced by a pack of boys. So I joined a group of them in the jauntiest manner I could assume and made artistic small-talk. I then perceived that they, in their turn, were rather



The other students glanced surreptitiously at me.

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They gazed at the thing and said not a word

awed by the middle-aged Englishman who was evidently on such good terms with the august professor.

"Come and have a look at my drawing," I said, in a humorous tone. "Criticize it." (The professor had disappeared.)

They came, politely. They gazed at the thing and said not a word.

"Of course, the head's too small," I remarked, airily.

"In effect," said one of them, gravely, "the head is rather small."

Nobody said anything else. The sitting was resumed.

V.

It might be thought that, after this baptism into a cult so acutely Parisian, I should have felt myself more than ever firmly rooted in the soil of France. But it was not so. For several years there had been gradually germinating in my mind the conviction that I should be compelled by some obscure instinct to return to England, where, unhappily, art is not cherished. I had a most disturbing suspicion that I was losing touch with England and that my work would soon begin to suffer accordingly. And one day I gave notice to my landlady, and then I began to get estimates for removing my furniture and books. And then I tried to sell to my landlady the fittings of the admirable bathroom which I had installed in her house, and she answered me that she had no desire for a bathroom in her house, and would I take the fittings away? And then I unhooked my pictures and packed up my books. And, lastly, the removers came and turned what had been a home into a litter of dirty straw. And I saw the tail of the last van as it rounded the corner. And I gave up my keys so bright with use. And I definitely quitted the land where eating and love are understood, where art and learning are honoured, where women well dressed and without illusions are not rare, where thrift flourishes, where politeness is practised, and where politics are shameful and grotesque. I return merely as a visitor. I should probably have enjoyed myself more in France, only I prefer to live in England and regret France than to live in France and regret England. I think the permanent exile is a pathetic figure.

I suppose I have a grim passion for England. But I know why France is the darling of nations.



She had no desire for a bathroom in her house

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A Cure for Coquettes.

By ANNESLEY KENEALY.

Illustrated by Tom Peddie.

NANCY PRIOR was on her way to the *Bon Ton* Dress Agency to sell her wedding-gown!

All her happiness lay buried in the white cardboard box which she carried clasped despairingly against her breast. To her overwrought nerves the parcel seemed to eat into her heart like a live thing that had teeth—and tore.

The sheeny, silken attire of a bride reposed coldly within the cardboard coffin. For so it had appeared to Nancy as she carefully embalmed her white bridal wonder-gown within its winding-sheet of tear-speckled tissue-paper. And she was quite sure that she had tied up the box with her own sore heart-strings. She was walking very slowly. At this rate she would most certainly lose the train which took her each morning to the City office in which she was employed. Well—she didn't care if she was late. She would be rather glad if Mr. Pinkerton senior did give her a week's notice. Nothing mattered to a girl who was on her way to sell her wedding-dress.

A sob of self-pity rose in her throat, a mutinous flash showed in her pretty, amber-brown eyes.

What a tragic errand she was bent upon!

But now that he was going to marry Sally Stevens she would do it—if only to show him that she didn't care a rap.

Besides, she wanted the money badly. The buying of the pretty trousseau, which she would never need now that her engagement to Jim Burton was broken off, had absorbed nearly all her girlish savings.

Her mother's serious illness, following closely on the frustrated wedding, had swallowed up the last of the little nest-egg which Nancy had put by each week from her salary as a typist.

The smell of spring was in the air. The day was full of hope and promise—to all but heart-empty Nancy.

Yes. If she didn't hurry she would assuredly lose her train. Perhaps, since it had to be done, she had better get it over quickly.

With unsteady pulses and a heart which hammered irregularly against her breast—and the cardboard box—she stopped in front of the agency. It was a new and very noticeable shop with a big, attractive plate-glass window, the shrine before which the feminine dress-hungerers of Balmer's Green worshipped fervidly.

A self-conscious wax model with primrose-coloured hair and pink cheeks wore a sky-blue evening toilette with the superior look of a lady whose dress entitles her to move in really smart circles. A white satin toque, trimmed with such a life-like imitation of his fur as would have deceived any but the most cynical among ermines, was marked down to eight-and-sixpence. And only the sourest spinster could have detected that it was not quite new.

Nancy despondently clutched at the front-door handle and entered the shop. There was no turning back now. So she deposited the cardboard box upon the counter with a resolute thump. Then she sighed.

"Good morning," said Miss Tompkyns, cheerily, from the other side of the counter. She was fair and plump, with pale, prominent blue eyes which looked as though they had been sent too often to the wash. Her air-cushion figure was comfortable and motherly. Powder lay like a white hoar-frost over her rather red face.

Nancy's tremulous lips strove to return the shop-assistant's pleasant salutation. But so far as cheerfulness was concerned the attempt was a conspicuous failure. Slowly and with fumbling fingers she tried to undo her parcel. But her fingers trembled so that she could not untie the knotted string.

"I'll undo it for you and welcome. It's a bit awkward with your gloves on." Miss Tompkyns put it very tactfully. Her understanding eye had taken in Nancy's pathetic, appealing little face, which told its own story of distress.

Doubtless there was some truth in the accusation brought against Nancy by the other girls in the office that "she gave herself airs." But they were such naive, lovable little airs that nobody minded much.

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There was no trace however this morning of the once coquettish and light-hearted girl who had played shuttlecock and battledore with the hearts of half the masculine contingent on the staff of John Pinkerton, Son, and Nephew.



"'I'M GOING TO SELL IT,' NANCY ANNOUNCED, FIERCELY."

Miss Tompkyns unpacked the shimmering folds of silk with the coaxing, semi-maternal tenderness with which a true woman handles pretty clothes. She patted and caressed it out of the cardboard box as though she were taking something soft and alive from a cradle.

"I'm going to sell it," Nancy announced, fiercely. Then, to conceal her tears, she laughed a hard little laugh. Her eyes had a hunted look. She watched the shopwoman who had taken possession of her wedding-gown very much as a mother would look at the guilty wretch who had stolen her baby. "I made it myself, every stitch of it, embroidered true-lovers' knots and all," the disappointed bride added, in an agonized voice.

"It's perfectly sweet. Months and months that embroidery must have took," the other said, admiringly.

Nancy nodded gulpingly. She didn't venture to speak. She knew what would happen if she tried.

"It's rather a bad job for you, p'r'aps, that Mme. Pouffine"—the principal of the agency—"is laid up with a cold. She might give more or she might give less than I.

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There's no telling. But I couldn't say more than thirty-five shillings and sixpence cash down."

"Thirty-five shillings and sixpence?" Nancy echoed, blankly. Perhaps she was thinking of all the love and hope and happiness she had stitched into its silken seams. "Why, the materials alone cost nearly four pounds."

"Mind, I'm not saying it isn't perfectly sweet. But it's not everybody's style. It 'ud suit you down to the ground. I'd just love to see you in it. But it ain't what most ladies would call *chick* and smart. And if a girl can't cut a fashionable figure at her wedding when *can* she hope to? That's what I always say. And most girls agrees with me."

"It's never been worn," said Nancy. Then she bit her lip and coloured painfully.

"Dearie me!" ejaculated Miss Tompkyns.

There was so much kindness in her voice that Nancy's composure broke down. Under the unnerving effect of pity she burst into tears and told the whole story of her quarrel with Jim and their broken engagement.

"And he's after another girl already, is he? This Sally Stevens, a particular chum of yours, who works in the same office? A nice, sly little tabby-cat she is, if people was called by their right names. I'd show him, and her too, if I was you." Miss Tompkyns's faded blue eyes held the light of battle. She too had known, in days gone by, what it was to have her young man decoyed away from her by another girl.

"He passes this shop twice a day," Nancy volunteered.

"Does he, now?" commented the lady in charge of the counter. She spoke reflectively and her usually kind lips tightened vixenishly.

"You'd be sure to recognize him, once you saw him. He's so good-looking."

Nancy showed all of a woman's pride in justifying her taste in masculinity.

"Handsome is as handsome does," snapped the shopwoman. "But the good-looking ones is always the worst female heart-breakers. I wonder, now, if he'd recognize that gown of yours again if he saw it?"

A set, vindictive purpose showed on her face.

"Recognize it?" Nancy echoed, rather scornfully. "I should think he would. Why, he's seen it hundreds of times. Watched me embroidering it evening after evening for months and months."

The girl's mind flew back to the pretty little rose-pink parlour where she and Jim were used to sit of evenings weaving happy rose-pink dreams of the days when they would live in a home-heaven of their own.

"Why, of course he'd know the frock again in a minute," she reiterated.

"Bless you, my dear, men's memories are as short as pie-crusts and their promises. But if you really believe your Jim would recognize that wedding gown of yours—I think it's rather chancy myself—I'll get 'upsides' with him in a way he won't forget."

But to all Nancy's pleadings for the satisfaction of her curiosity Miss Tompkyns turned an ear of adamant.

"Never you mind, my dear. You just run along and catch your train."

"You're not going to hurt Jim's feelings, are you?" the girl asked, apprehensively.

"Feelings?" her champion repeated, with fine sarcasm. "How about him and his sly, pussy-cat Sally? I'm not one of your woolly-lamb women who spoils men and reg'lar puffs them up with conceit. Bantam cocks in trousers, that's what I call most of 'em. You leave your fine gentleman to me, my dear. I'll pay him out as he deserves. And here's two guineas for your gown, and chance what madame says, though she's a tongue inside her mouth as long as from now to next week."

As the money was handed across the counter Nancy knew just how Judas must have felt when he took the thirty pieces. With a guilty conviction that she had sold her soul, she thrust the coins into her blue hand-bag and ran off breathlessly to catch the eight-forty-five up—the train by which she and Jim always travelled to the City office where both were employed.

The dreary finality of her love-story struck at her as she mounted the station steps and found that she had five minutes to spare. A sideways glance from her charming eyes showed her that Jim had reached the station first.

The platform manœuvres which for the past two months he and she had evolved so as to avoid a face-to-face meeting now began. It was a distressing compulsion which forced them to go up by the same train. But there was no way out of it—unless she gave up her situation. This would be a serious risk to take. The post was a good one, and the salary enabled her to supplement her mother's meagre annuity. If she resigned she might be out of a position for months.

While waiting on the platform of a morning she sometimes heard in the distance Jim's voice, or his laughter, but not often his laughter. His face had taken on a new,

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grim, unsmiling look which was not very flattering to Sally Stevens, to whom—so everybody said—he was now engaged. So that, added to Nancy's sorrow for her lost lover, was the new, gnawing pain of jealousy.



"JIM SLIGHTLY RAISED HIS HAT—GAZED STRAIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM—AND PASSED ON."

How soon he had forgotten to want her, the girl thought, bitterly. Although Jim had so readily consoled himself, she could never care for another man. With the wonderful wisdom of twenty, she decided drearily that she would always remain unloved and unwed. That the broken engagement was entirely her own fault only made matters worse. It always does.

As she paced to and fro, avoiding nervously the spot at which Jim stood, she became aware, through the mysterious faculty women possess of seeing without eyes, that Jim was walking deliberately towards her. Unless she turned tail and fled they must meet. Well—she wasn't going to show the white feather. As Jim approached, his and her looks met full—and sympathetically—for a moment. Nancy's eyes were her crowning charm. They were brown, with curious, enticing little gold flecks in them. And she had a pretty turn to her head.

The faint violet perfume of the girl's clothes struck at the man with a maddeningly familiar sweetness. Her nearness caused him to catch his breath. For a brief second both hesitated. Then pride asserted itself. Interest faded from the four eyes and was replaced by a chill, unrecognizing stare. Jim slightly raised his hat—gazed straight in front of him—and passed on.

They were playing the old, old lovers' comedy of "Let's pretend we don't care"—a game in which hearts and happiness are used instead of dice.

Simultaneously two limp, nerveless hands turned the tarnished brass handles of two separate third-class compartments. The local engine gave a defiant snort; then it started for Cannon Street. As the train steamed out of the station the porters slammed the carriage doors with a vicious snap. And it seemed to Jim and Nancy that

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life had locked its door in their faces and shut them out of everything that was young and gay and happy.

It was but a short walk from Cannon Street to the Pinkertons' office, that office which had seen the beginning of Nancy's great happiness—and the end of it. As she approached the entrance she carefully composed a smiling countenance and a cheap little air of triumph designed to throw dust in the watchful eyes of the other girls at her place of business. But it did not deceive even the lift-boy—who knew all about the affair. The broken engagement was an event of keen dramatic value to the office. It gave the staff something exciting to talk about. For love in distress is interesting to everybody and pleasing to many.

"'E ain't come yet," the lift-boy announced with evil glee.

"Who ain't come?" Nancy retorted, somewhat snappishly.

"W'y, Nephew Pinkerton, of course. Who else could I mean?" her tormentor answered, with an air of rubbing it in rather effectively. "One of these days Pa Pinkerton 'll give 'im the sack. His lordship's late again. P'r'aps he's been run over by a motor-bus," the boy hazarded, as he unlocked the lift gates.

Nancy rather hoped that he had. It was her foolish, empty flirtation with the junior partner of the firm which had broken her life—or, at any rate, her engagement. Nephew Pinkerton was an undecided, ineffective young man, who wore a single eye-glass and was compounded of cigarette-ash, drawl, and "side." He was not in the least attractive to Nancy, or to any other girl. But when she saw that her coquetries and eye-play—Eve's original sins, in short—annoyed Jim, she had persisted in and redoubled them. And the cad in Pinkerton had led him to boast of his easy conquest.

Then the man in Jim had spoken, and the woman in Nancy had said too much. So the engagement was broken off. And Nancy's comforting conviction that Jim's storm of jealousy would blow itself out, as storms sometimes do, had not been realized.

Nephew Pinkerton treated pretty girls *en bloc*, as if they had been consigned to him on the approval plan, and all that he had to do was to announce his intention of retaining his choice for life. But the broken engagement had brought him to his mean little bearings. He did not intend to be "had" by a designing young typist. So when he and Nancy met unavoidably Nephew Pinkerton now bore a ludicrous resemblance to a perambulating poker. Through his monocle he stared at the discomfited girl with a hard, glassy, unrecognizing eye.

"Good morning, dear," Sally Stevens said, in a gay voice, as her former friend seated herself at her desk. "How sweet you look." She gazed admiringly at the slender, pliant figure clad in a one-piece blue serge frock, with bands of white embroidery at the waist, throat, and wrists.

Despite the burning jealousy and heart-torments which raged within, Nancy returned her rival's salutation with a radiant surface smile.

"Papa Pinkerton dictated all these letters last night after office hours. He wants them typed with extra special care. So I brought them to you, dear." The senior partner's confidential clerk handed Nancy a bundle of correspondence.

In doing so she displayed with ostentatious cruelty a new ring she wore—Jim's gift, of course, for it shone on the third finger of her left hand! She had brought the letters to Jim's former sweetheart in a spirit of mean triumph, the humiliated girl reflected, bitterly. Aloud she said:—

"All right. You can leave them on the desk. I'll start typing them at once."

There was a plaintive catch in the pretty "sing" of her voice. But Sally did not appear to notice it. She was an angular, meagre-bodied young woman with a brisk, businesslike manner and steel-rimmed *pince-nez*. Not a bit the sort of girl Nancy would have expected Jim to love—and marry!

The jilted typist settled dully to her duty. It was of no use now, in face of that new, tell-tale ring, to cling to any hope of reconciliation with Jim. After all that had been, she now stood outside her lover's life. He was going to marry Sally Stevens. Nevertheless, Nancy had not ceased to love him because of his faithlessness and the heartaches he had caused her. No woman ever does.

The morning hours moved along with heavy feet. Lunch-time came at last. Jim buttoned his light spring overcoat in preparation for going out to his midday meal. He took down his hat. Then he glanced towards Nancy's desk and saw that her big, brown eyes were watching him wistfully. His kind heart smote him for the girl's pale and tragic face. But he showed no sign of all that he felt. He had devised a sure cure for Nancy's pertinacious coquetry, and he meant to see it through.

"If you're ready, Sal, we'll go to Gemini's Restaurant to-day—for a treat."

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Sally gave a smiling assent. Nancy, watching from the tail of a flaming eye, saw that Jim pinned a bunch of violets—the very kind he used to give to her—into her successful rival's severely plain "business suit." The newly-engaged couple then went off in a light-hearted way to eat a merry little meal together. Nancy consumed a Bath bun and a cup of tea in choking, miserable solitude.

At the close of the long, weary day she interviewed Mr. Pinkerton, senior, in his private sanctum. She gave him a week's notice.

"Ah!" he said, archly, shaking a fat finger at her with playful ponderousness. "A little bird whispered to me something about wedding-bells and orange-blossoms. Well, I can't complain. I did the same myself when I was young. With the handsome legacy his uncle left him Mr. Burton can well afford to marry and set up in business for himself. But we're sorry to lose both of you."

With stumbling agitation Nancy thanked her employer. If she had known of the legacy and that Jim was leaving the firm she would not have resigned, although she was beginning to loathe the office where her ex-lover had broken her heart. For this was how she still thought about it. Jim's standpoint had not occurred to her. For Nancy was too much of a woman not to know how to be utterly unreasonable.

When she left Balmer's Green station a chill, drizzling rain was falling. She had no umbrella. Jim had always shared his with her.

Despite the rainy night a big crowd stood in front of the Dress Agency window—Jim among them.

What could they be looking at?

Her curiosity was soon satisfied. One panic-stricken glance through the plate-glass window showed her that Miss Tompkyns had despoiled the smiling wax model of her sky-blue costume, and had dressed her in Nancy's wedding-gown.

The mannequin's insipid primrose hair was covered with a golden-brown "transformation" amazingly like that of the girl who stood outside in the rain staring dejectedly at her waxen double, whose pose was in admirable imitation of herself. Miss Tompkyns had certainly accomplished her task with the inspiration of genius and a guile which was diabolically feminine.

The touching tableau presented by the mateless waxen bride simpering beneath her snowy veil with its realistic trail of orange-blossoms could not fail to convey to Jim's consciousness that he was a heartless brute—a mere flashlight flirt. Miss Tompkyns had determined to reduce the young man to his worm-level. And she was triumphantly convinced that she had succeeded.

Nancy's eyes deepened and flashed with anger. But what could she do? The Dress Agency had bought and paid for her wedding-gown. And they were entitled to display it in the most attractive fashion. Hot with shame and repentance, she flew home.

Next morning she walked to the station on the other side of the street.

Jim left the office earlier than usual that day. A curious smile showed beneath his brown moustache. Arrived at Balmer's Green, he walked straight to the *Bon Ton* Agency and strode inside.

Miss Tompkyns knew without need of words who he was and what he had come for. She stiffened at the collar. She surveyed him with cold, crocodile eyes.

"Will you kindly pack up the white dress that's in the window?" he said, briskly.

"It's four-eighteen-six," she snorted. What a fool she had been to label it! She couldn't double the price now.

He handed to the infuriated figure behind the counter a crisp new five-pound note.

"Don't you want the measurements?" she inquired, defiantly. "It's a slender—not a stock size."

"No, thanks. That's all right. I'm quite sure it will fit the lady it's meant for."

"Oh! It's for a lady, is it?" Miss Tompkyns's curiosity got the better of her shop manners.

"Yes—the lady I'm going to marry," he retorted, flippantly.

"Perhaps she won't like it. It isn't every girl who'd wear another young lady's wedding-dress." Her voice cut like a nipping east wind.

"Don't worry," he answered. "The girl I'm thinking of won't mind." His easy assurance got on Miss Tompkyns's nerves.

She had a moment of magnificent recklessness in which she determined to slap Jim's face and decline to sell him Nancy's wedding-gown. At this crisis "Mme. Pouffine"—who in private life was Miss Nuppins—sailed angularly into the show-room and cast an attentive and proprietorial eye on her *employée* and the unusual circumstance of a masculine customer.

With clenched fists and a tight-reefed mouth, Miss Tompkyns publicly and shamelessly disrobed the waxen lady. Viciously

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she folded the wedding garment in the same box in which Nancy had brought it to the agency. Looking as though she were going to bite him, she handed Jim the change from his bank-note.

"Shall I send the parcel home—sir?"

white cardboard box said, with a pleased smile. "I'm much obliged for all your kindness," he added, sarcastically. "Good evening." As he left the shop he whistled softly and cheerily under his breath.

The outraged shopwoman's face grew as



"A BIG CROWD STOOD IN FRONT OF THE DRESS AGENCY WINDOW—JIM AMONG THEM."

The watchful eyes of Miss Nuppins necessitated the conventions of the counter. But the last word sounded as though a snake had hissed.

"No, thanks. I won't trouble you. The lady lives quite close by," the recipient of the

hard as a hatchet. "Well, of all the heartless brutes, he's the limit! Throws over one girl. In less than a week engages himself to another. That ain't enough, but my lord ups and buys the first girl's wedding-gown as a present for number two."

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"Well, I never!" ejaculated Miss Nuppins, overcome by her assistant's concise recital of such bare-faced masculine baseness. "I'd have expected such a man to have hoofs and horns. Instead of that he's remarkably good-looking."

"That sort always is," Miss Tompkyns announced, with the air of one who knew.

Half an hour later Nancy's lagging feet bore her wearily homeward. As in the morning, she walked on the opposite side of the street. She was determined not to look in the *Bon Ton* windows. But as she reached the spot her eyes mutinied. They stole a flashlight peep at the forbidden. Then she flew across the street. Her widened eyes fixed themselves with horror upon the shop-window.

Her wedding-gown was gone! Once more the waxen lady assumed superior, simpering airs in the sky-blue silk toilette.

The terrible news that Jim had bought the gown as a present for Sally Stevens was imparted to her by Miss Tompkyns, who had watched for Nancy's passing through an eyelet-hole in the majestic red velvet curtains which draped the shop-front.

"And I'd go and tear it off her tabby-cat back if I was you. It's what any lady would do," Miss Nuppins's right-hand asserted, with flaming cheeks and homicidal eyes.

But Nancy's courage was beaten out of her. She was too spiritless to heed Miss Tompkyns's extended programme of the retaliations it was possible to practise upon Sally Stevens and her base accomplice.

Pale and tear-stained, she trudged homeward. With Jim the walk from the station to her mother's six-roomed stuccoed villa used to seem so aggravatingly short. The newly-made suburban road between two dead walls plastered with picture-palace posters now seemed interminably long and unutterably dreary. A courting couple walked in front of her. Their demonstrative arm-twinings were more than the unkissed girl could endure. The sweet breath of spring was in the air. The lettuce-green lilac-bushes were bursting into flower. She thought of the delightsome Sundays when she and Jim had cycled together in green-hedged lanes, or walked hand in hand looking for golden daffodils or for the first peep of the primroses on the grassy banks.

How empty her week-ends and evenings were now!

When she reached home she went into the rose-pink-chintzed parlour once radiant with happy memories of love and him. It seemed now like a grave in which all her girlish light-heartedness was buried. She sank listlessly into a chair, rested her gold-brown head upon the red rep tablecloth, and burst into tears.

Jim found her there a few minutes later, when he came in carrying the white card-board box triumphantly in his arms. He raised the pale, tear-blotted young face and looked very tenderly into the eyes of the girl he loved. The wistful shadows in their gold-flecked depths struck at his heart and conscience. He knew then that he and Sally Stevens had carried their "cure for a coquette" too far. A girl's wilfulness and her love of flirtation had been too heavily punished.

"Can you ever forgive me, Nancy, darling?" he said, very softly.

As she turned towards him her brimming eyes were arrested by the white cardboard box on the table. With his handkerchief Jim tenderly mopped the water-courses on the girl's cheeks.

"I — thought — the — box — was — for — Sally," she sobbed, heavingly. "Everybody was sure you were engaged to her. The shop-woman said you bought my frock for the girl you are going to marry."

"Well, isn't it so? Aren't you going to marry me, darling?" he asked, smiling. Jim had a very winning smile. He kissed her cheeks, her lips, and her eyes. How delightful it was to cry her heart out on his broad shoulder!

A couple of hours later, after supper, Jim sat smoking and thinking. Nancy was close beside him, curled up cosily among the rose-pink sofa-cushions.

"We must ask Miss Tompkyns to our wedding, sweetheart. Good old Tompkyns," he said, taking the pipe from his mouth.

"To-morrow is Saturday. We'll spend the afternoon primrosing, just we two together, Jim, darling," she answered.

Then the little rose-bud clock chimed the old signal for Jim's departure. He set his kissing marks upon the girl's happy cheeks. Then he went home to his lodgings and jubilantly gave his landlady a month's notice. For he and Nancy were going to move to the "home-heaven" of their dreams.

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The Mystery of the Sap.

With Striking Original Experiments.

By JOHN J. WARD, F.E.S., and GEORGE S. HEAVEN, B.Sc.

Illustrated with Photographs by John J. Ward.

FOLLOWING the lull of winter comes that familiar but nevertheless remarkable phenomenon of the tall bare branches of trees quietly bursting apart the scale-leaves of their buds and revealing a delicate tracery of green, which rapidly changes into a rich garment of thick foliage. Almost at the same hour, too, every bare patch of the brown earth is similarly clothed with the first leaves of tiny seedlings, which again quickly mature into the familiar herbage of summer days.

Why this sudden and wondrous change? What has happened to cause those rich, energy-yielding materials stored in tree-trunks and seeds to so vigorously revive their activities? Some huge wave of energy seems to have commenced its course through the earth, gathering volume as it travels, until it reaches its climax.

How the raw sap travels from the absorbing roots beneath the ground to the topmost twig on an oak or elm tree, more than one hundred feet above, and to nearly four or five times that height in the case of some of the mammoth gum-trees (eucalyptus) of the Tasmanian forests, and in the gigantic Wellingtonia of California, has long puzzled the physicist to explain. The old idea that capillarity is the factor at work, the fluid being conveyed up the trunk and branches after the manner of oil through the wick of a lamp, becomes an altogether inadequate explanation. Especially is this so when we realize that, in some of the internal tissues of the stem, the pressure exerted reaches from eight to twenty atmospheres, or in other words from one hundred and twenty to three hundred pounds to the square inch—a force greater than that in the boiler of a normal railway-engine.

This mighty pressure, scattered more or less irregularly through the tissues of the tree, drives the sap to the buds and forces them open, expands their leaves, and is continually at work wherever the process of building new structures is going on. It is obvious, therefore, that the engineering arrangements for the conducting and controlling of this powerful stream of life-giving sap must be very perfectly organized. Indeed, they are more than that; they present marvels of mechanical construction which are not only astonishing on account of their perfection, but are so minute that man can only penetrate the mysteries and beauty of their structure by means of high-power microscopes and careful chemical investigations. Even then he is left baffled and wondering.

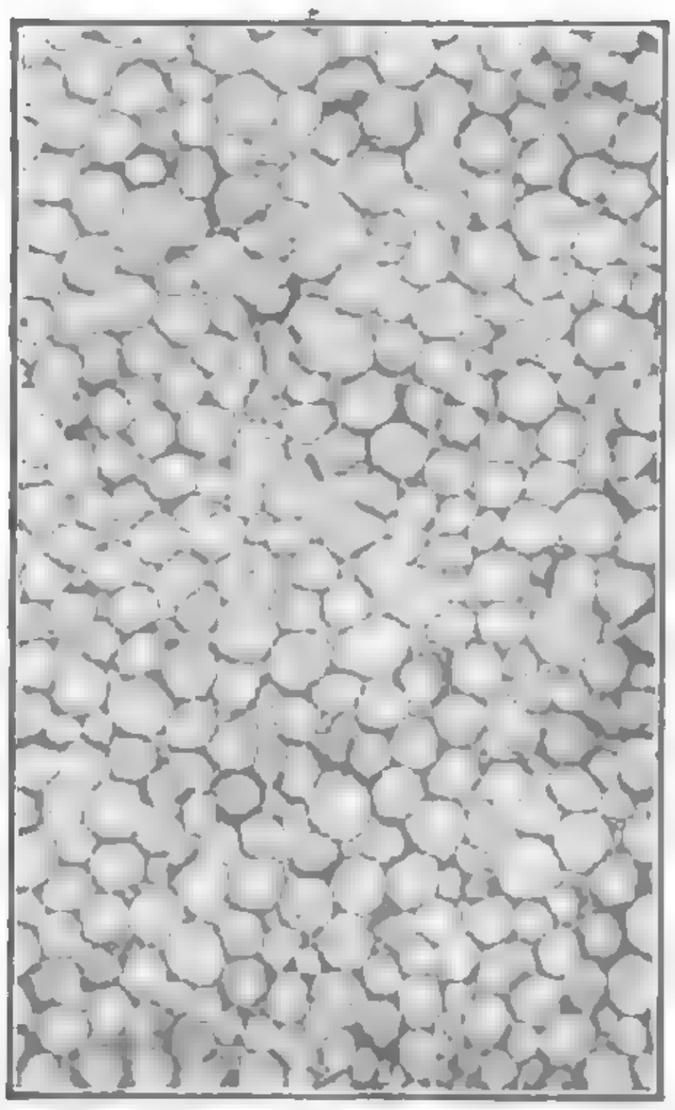


Fig. 1. — The "bricks," or cells, innumerable millions of which build up the plant stem and leaves.

We propose to invite the reader to accompany us, as it were, into these normally invisible engine-houses within the plant structure, not only to examine the marvels of mechanical ingenuity to be found there, but also to consider those mysterious forces which set the "pumps" in action and apply themselves vigorously or gently as may be required of them in the welfare of the plant edifice.

The familiar sunflower plant which in the course of the summer months produces a strong stem from six to eight feet in height, bearing abundant leaves and huge heads of flowers, will well serve for consideration of structural details. In Fig. 1 is shown a photograph of a tiny portion of the central pith of the stem, as it appears under the

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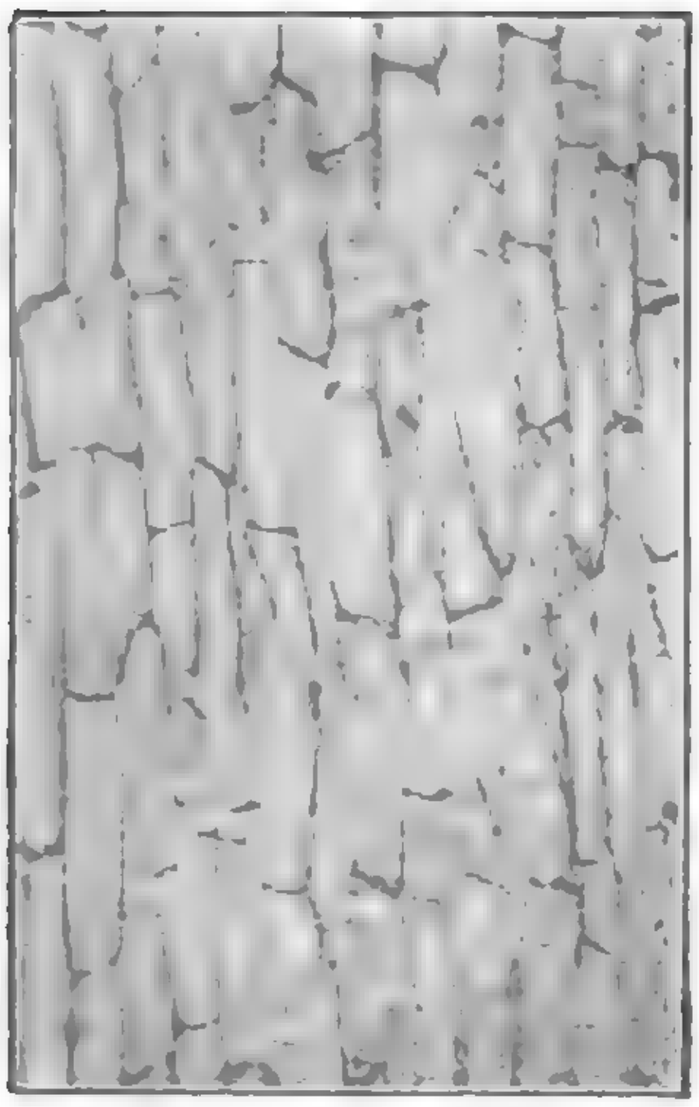


Fig. 2.—Some of the cells shown in Fig. 1 seen in the direction of their length.

"eye" of a microscope, and it is there seen to be composed of a large number of cells in close contact with each other, just like the bricks in the walls of a house. Indeed, these tiny cells are the "bricks" which build up the plant structure. If we cut the stem in a longitudinal manner, showing these cells in the direction of their length, they appear as shown in Fig. 2, where they are seen to be more or less oblong in shape, and, besides being arranged side by side, they are placed in rows end on end, from the base to the summit of the stem.

The cells shown in the two photographs would, in each case, fit with room to spare in the space occupied by the full stop at the end of this sentence. Their interior is occupied with a transparent, jelly-like substance known as protoplasm, or life-material, and from such simple cells are derived all the more complex tissues within the plant structure. In the earliest stages of a plant its structure consists almost entirely of cells of the simple type shown in Figs. 1 and 2, but immediately leaves begin to form the lateral walls of some of the rows of cells commence to thicken, while their end walls become absorbed. In this manner the rows of cells are modified into long tubes of various diameters, as shown in Fig. 3.

In trees this thickening of the tubes continues until they become what we know as solid wood. In fact, when we saw through the trunk of an oak tree, we are simply severing myriads of these woody tubes, all of which are so small and closely packed together that to our eyes they give the impression of a solid substance. Nevertheless, they all had their origin from simple rows of soft and delicate cells similar to those shown in Figs. 1 and 2.

The walls of the tubes do not become equally solid, but thicken irregularly in various recognized ways. Some develop a spiral thickening, and are known as spiral vessels or tubes; others become ringed at intervals and are termed annular; still others develop netted thickening over their surface, and are called reticulated vessels. In Fig. 3 this irregular thickening of the walls is shown in the broadest tubes, while in Fig. 4 it is still more clearly exhibited.

At first these tubes appear in isolated strands or bundles, embedded amongst the simple pith-cells, and in trees they are arranged in a ring. As the bundles increase in size they eventually meet, and then form a more or less irregular band. In Fig. 5 a section of an oak twig is shown magnified to reveal the band of wood tissues. In the centre of the photograph the ground or pith-cells are seen, and immediately outside these appears the dark-coloured band of wood elements. A lighter band of small-celled tissue follows, which the botanist terms the cambium cells, and it is these small cells that give origin to the new layers of cells which are gradually changed into wood tubes or vessels, in the manner shown in Fig. 3.



Fig. 3.—Showing how the rows of cells within the stem-structure gradually change into water-mains.

The cambium tissue is continually dividing up its cells and depositing them in layers on the inside of the stem, and these are wood-forming cells. As they harden the cambium expands to allow room for further layers; in this way, while adding wood to the central area, it is also ever increasing the girth of the

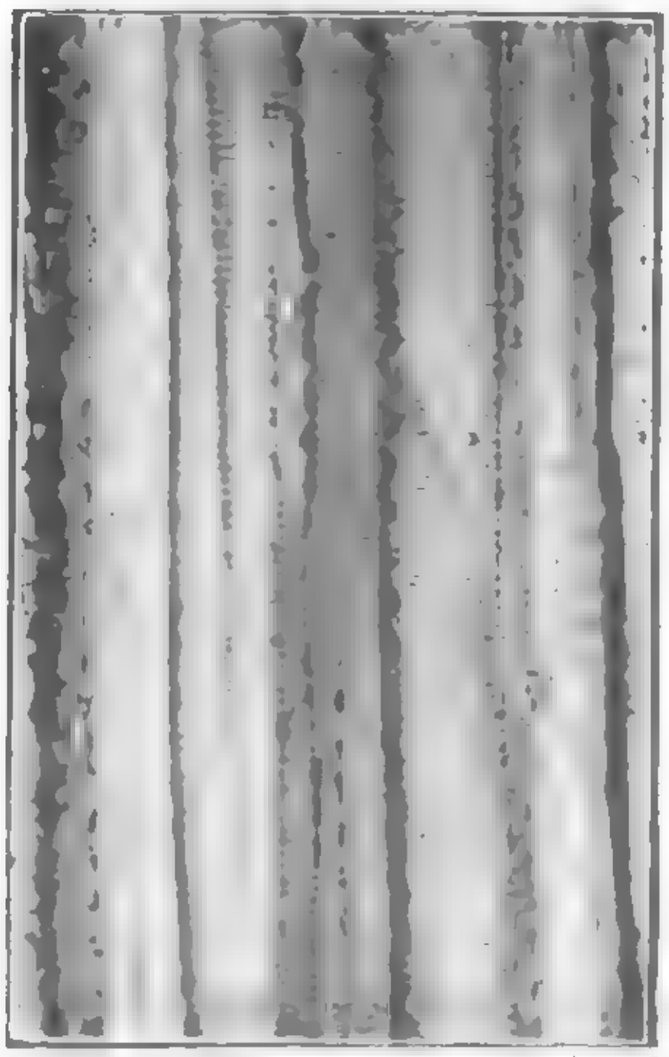


Fig. 4.—The water-mains hardened and fully developed.

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stem. Beyond the cambium, still working from the centre outwards, is a narrower band of dark-looking tissue, and as this has largely to do with the conveyance of the elaborated sap downwards to the roots and other parts, it need not concern us very much here. Still farther outside, more ground-cells similar to those of the central pith are found, these being enclosed with layers of bark-cells.

As it is not an easy matter to teach the general reader structural botany in a few paragraphs, let us recapitulate. A fresh green stem is composed of millions of tiny cells of the pith type, among which are strands of similar cells which have become modified into tubes or wood-vessels, which extend up and down the stem, giving it strength and flexibility. These strands in woody trees unite to form a band, which gradually increases layer by layer from the modification of cambium cells until a solid wood trunk is built up.

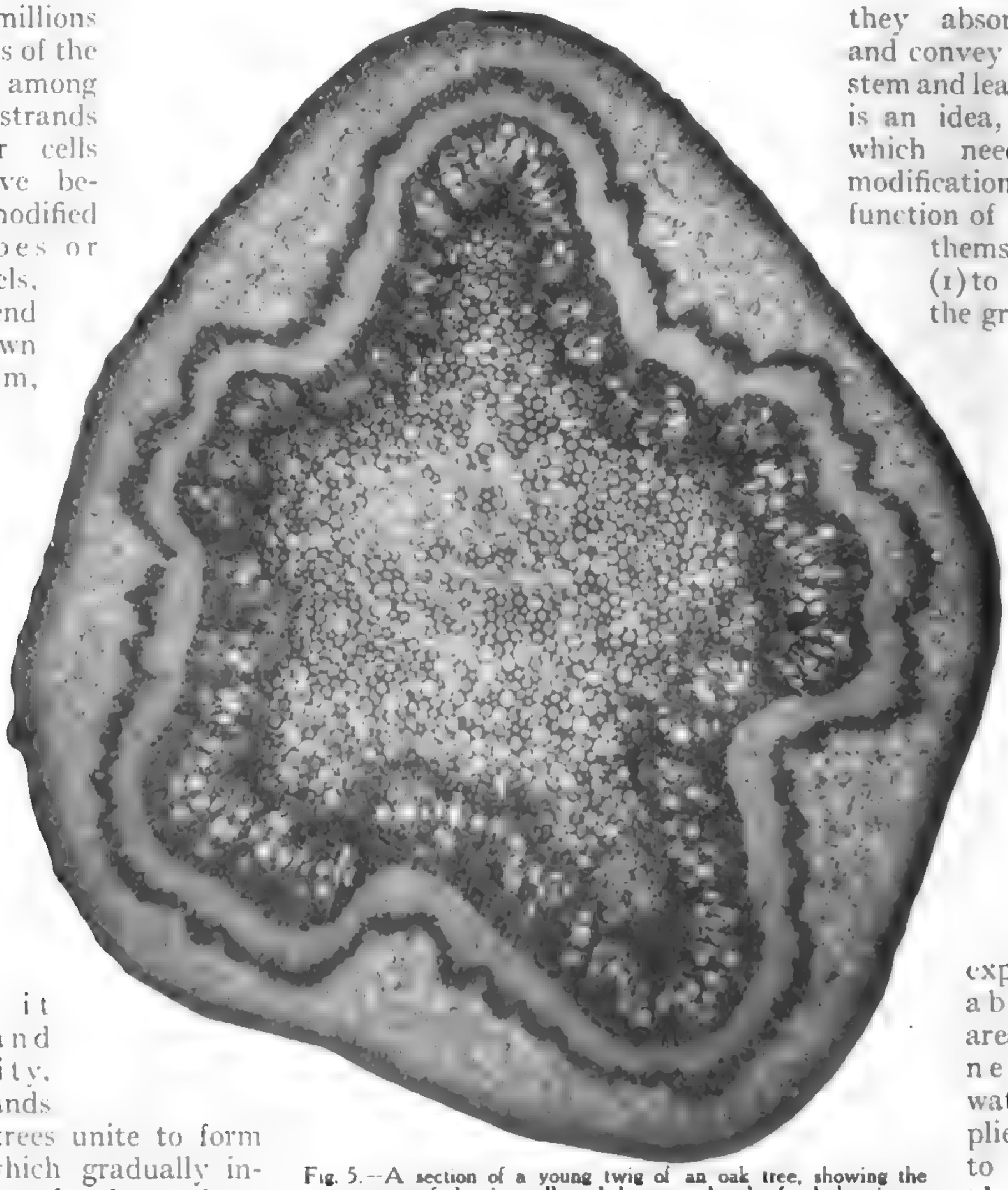


Fig. 5.—A section of a young twig of an oak tree, showing the arrangement of the tiny cells and the strong bands of tubular tissues which conduct the sap through the stem. Magnified thirty diameters.

It is important that we should understand the origin and structure of these wood elements in the plant stem, for these are the water-pipes and mains through which the raw sap is carried up from the roots, for when the cells become wood-tubes they lose their protoplasm, or living material, and simply serve a mechanical function; consequently they never afterwards grow larger — they have become functionally specialized in the structure.

The structure of the roots reveals much the same features of cells and vascular or wood tissues, and these join up with those of the stem, forming a complete arrangement of "water-pipes" from root-tips to the highest bud above ground.

It is a common notion, when we see the roots of a plant or tree penetrating the soil in all directions, that they absorb water and convey it to the stem and leaves. That is an idea, however, which needs some modification, for the function of the roots themselves is (1) to penetrate the ground and explore suitable moist areas for the necessary water supplies, and (2) to anchor the plant firmly to the ground. The necessity for strong anchorage is readily understood when we see a large tree uprooted by a fierce gale, and consequently the root-branches of a large tree are very extensive, as shown in Fig. 6.

It is not such roots, however, that are gathering in the huge supplies of sap required by the countless leaves, flowers, and fruits

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Fig. 6.—How the roots of a large beech tree penetrate the soil.

above ground. That function is performed by extremely tiny root-hairs, a host of which appear on a restricted zone a little distance behind each young root-tip. It should be clearly understood that these hairs are not the root-fibres which we see when we pull up a seedling, or turn out a plant from a pot in which it has been growing. Indeed, these absorbing hairs are so small that there may be as many as three or four hundred of them on an area of the root-fibre equal to that of a pin's head. Yet it is these tiny hairs which convey fluids to the stem, sometimes with the ultimate internal pressure equal to that of the steam in the boiler of a railway-engine.

These root-hairs are very remarkable structures, and their existence is very short-lived, for as the root-tip grows and increases in length new hairs are formed, while those behind shrivel and fall away. In this manner the little army of absorbing hairs keeps an equal distance from the root-tip, which is threading its way through the soil and seeking moist places. The whole group of hairs of the root-fibre may not occupy more than one-tenth of an inch of its length (Fig. 7), yet they are gathering in sufficient moisture (with the mineral matters of the soil dissolved therein), not only to support the comparatively thick root-fibre from which they spring, but also to send up abundant additional supplies for the requirements of the leaves, flowers, and fruit high up above ground.

So marvellously do they absorb water that, before it has penetrated many of the outer layers of cells within the root-fibre, it may exert a pressure there equal to three atmospheres, or forty-five pounds to the square inch. This pressure passes on the water by diffusion through the successive layers of ground-cells of the root until the wood-tubes are reached, which during sunlight always have a greater or lesser tendency to be emptied of water, as it is then being continually raised in the stem, and there conveyed to the leaves, where it is quickly evaporated into the atmosphere.

The tubes also form an almost closed system, so far as the admittance of air is concerned; in fact, if air penetrated them the sap would be unable to continue its upward course.

We have previously observed that the walls of the wood-tubes are thickened irregularly (Fig. 4), and it is through their thinner parts that the water penetrates, those portions being very permeable; they are, however, not actual apertures, the water penetrating by inward diffusion. Once in the tubes it joins the general current, which travels to all

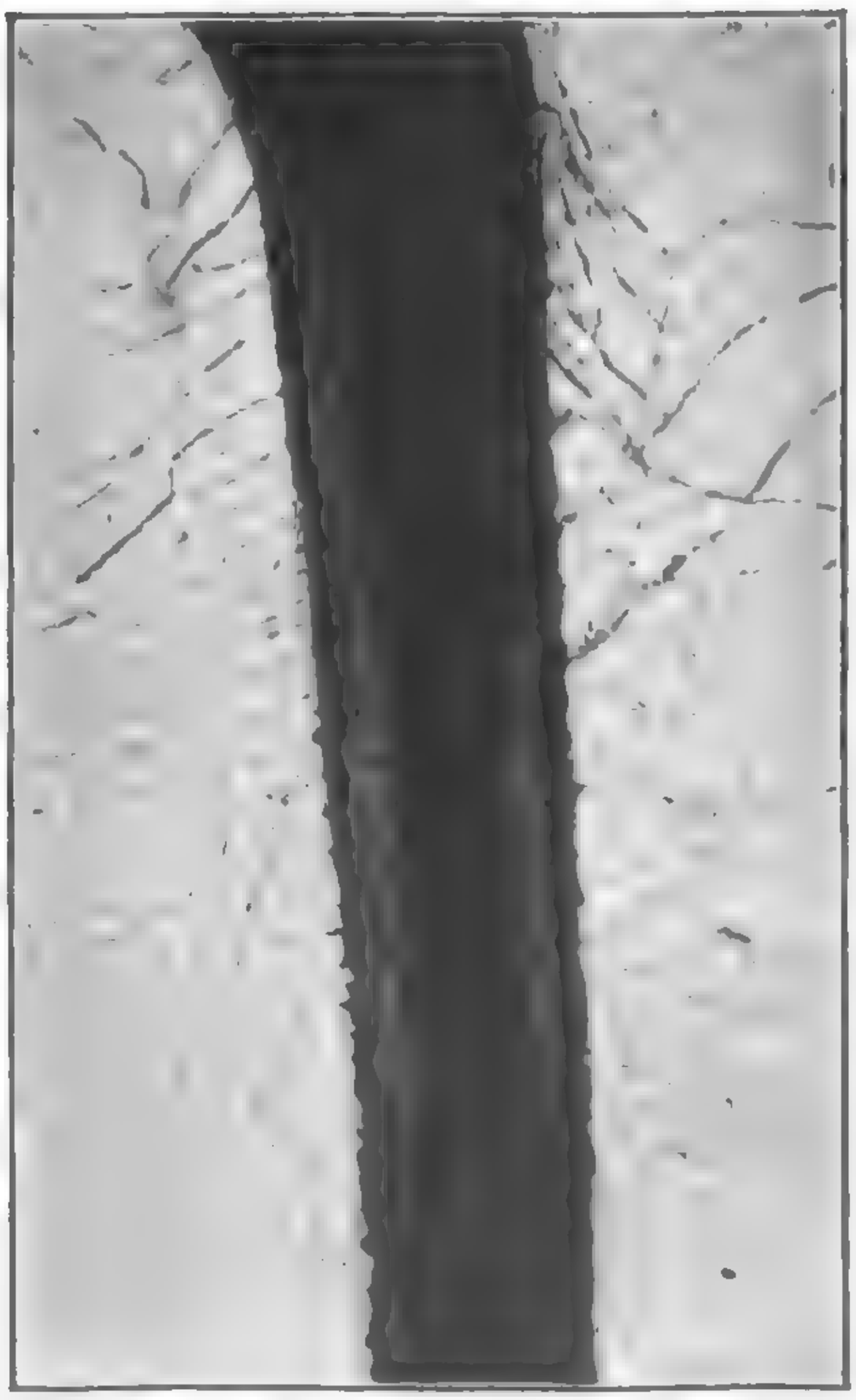


Fig. 7.—Part of a root-fibre, showing its delicate hairs which absorb water solutions from the soil. Magnified one hundred diameters.

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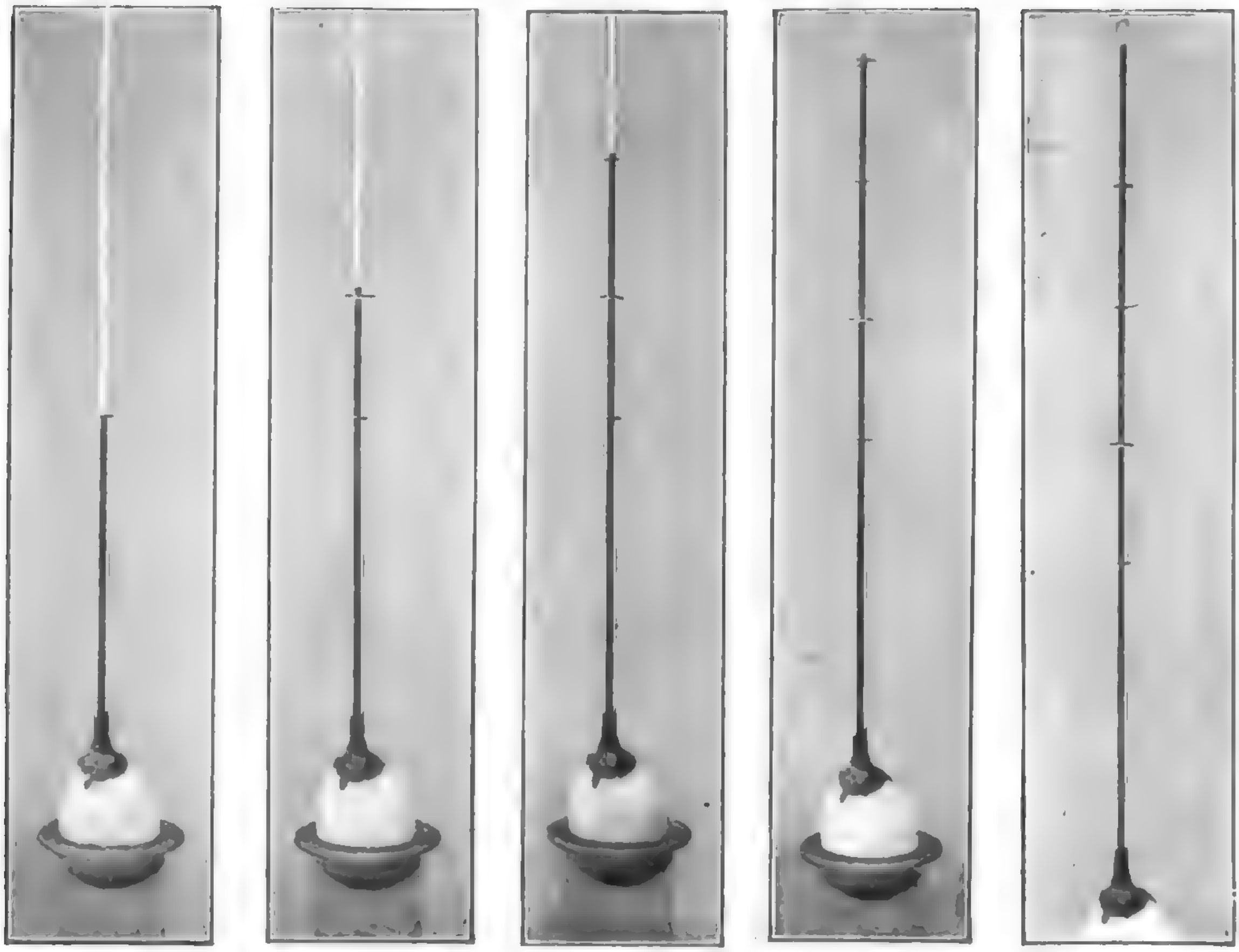


Fig. 8. Fig. 9. Fig. 10. Fig. 11. Fig. 12.

Fig. 8.—A blown egg containing treacle, with its base placed in a jar of water, the shell being dissolved from that part, but the skin, or inner membrane, remaining unbroken. The mysterious natural force known as osmosis has in one hour forced the heavy treacle up the tube to the point marked. Fig. 9.—Ten minutes later, after placing in sunlight. Fig. 10.—Height attained at the end of twenty minutes. Fig. 11.—After half an hour it had ascended about one foot. Fig. 12.—In forty minutes the top of the tube was reached—a total height of nearly sixteen inches.

parts of the plant structure. When we examine a leaf and observe its nervures or veins, as they become thinner and thinner, and eventually disappear near the tip or edge of it, we then see where the wood elements or water-pipes terminate their course.

Although we have shown the connection with the minute root-hairs working in darkness below the soil, and the leaves and flowers spread out to the atmosphere and sunlight above, yet this does nothing towards explaining why the moisture of the soil penetrates the plant-hairs so vigorously. Man is well aware that he cannot convey water several hundred feet into the air without the assistance of elaborate pumping-engines, or similar mechanisms; yet the plant seems to possess none of these arrangements. The physicist consequently asks, "What force is it that causes water to enter the plant structure in so extraordinary a manner, and to exert such high pressures?" For a reply to the question he proceeds to experiment.

Taking an ordinary hen's egg, he removes its contents by the process known as blowing, using the method now usually adopted—namely, by drilling a hole at one end only. That successfully accomplished, he then places the uninjured end of the egg in an acid, which dissolves off a portion of the shell, but does not affect the tough inner membrane or skin, which has to remain whole. The egg-shell is then filled with a heavy liquid, such as treacle, and the top of it at the drilled hole carefully spread over with sealing-wax to support a long piece of glass tubing above the hole, the connection being made so that no leakage can occur.

This rather difficult experiment successfully performed, the physicist argues thus: "I have here something analogous to a large vegetable cell filled with jelly-like protoplasm. Will water penetrate this artificial cell through the closed membrane?" He places the end portion of the egg from which the shell has been dissolved into a jar of water, and the result of such an experiment is shown in Fig. 8, as it appeared at the end of one hour.

It will be seen that the egg is steadily absorbing water through the membrane at

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Fig. 13.—A highly-magnified young root-hair, showing that it is a single vegetable cell protruding its outer wall into a long tube. Magnified three hundred diameters.

its base, and, being full to start with, it cannot hold more; consequently, either the egg-shell must burst, or some of the treacle be forced up the tube, and the latter, offering the least resistance, is naturally what takes place. In a warmer temperature the absorption of the water becomes much more rapid, as shown in Figs. 9 to 11, where ten-minutes intervals are marked on the tube. Fig. 12 shows the top of the tube reached, a total height of nearly sixteen inches, when, to prevent the treacle from coming over, the water at the base was removed. Had the tube been longer, the treacle and added water would doubtless have continued to travel upwards until the fluid within the egg-shell and that of the external water had become both of the same sweet solution of uniform composition, when the force would cease to act.

Similar experiments may be made in quite a variety of ways with glass tubes and jars, filled with sugar and other solutions, closed with a bladder-membrane at their mouths, and then immersed in more watery solutions, when the bladder-membrane becomes pushed outwards; or if the solution of sugar were outside, and the water in the closed vessel, the membrane would be pushed inwards, the action continuing until the fluids were of equal density.

The physicist, having demonstrated this peculiar property or force exercised by solutions of crystal-like substances when separated from water, or weaker solutions of crystal-producing materials, by a semi-permeable membrane, gives it the name "osmosis," from the Greek *osmos*—an impulse, or pushing.

We now turn to the minute root-hairs, and more carefully examine their structure. In Fig. 13 one of these hairs is shown highly magnified at an early stage, just when it commences to protrude from the root-fibre into the soil. The magnification at once shows that the hair is nothing more than one of the outer cells of the root-fibre itself, and that it only differs from the cells immediately above or below it in that its outer wall has protruded into a finger-like tube, the living protoplasm within it circulating through the whole tube, just as it does in the original cell.

The root-hair, then, is a modified cell. How does that cell absorb water? The physicist replies, "By the process of osmosis." The protoplasm of the cell, he contends, is a fluid of a character very different to the water outside the hair, and the water is consequently absorbed, just as it was in the experiment of the egg and treacle.

Apparently, then,

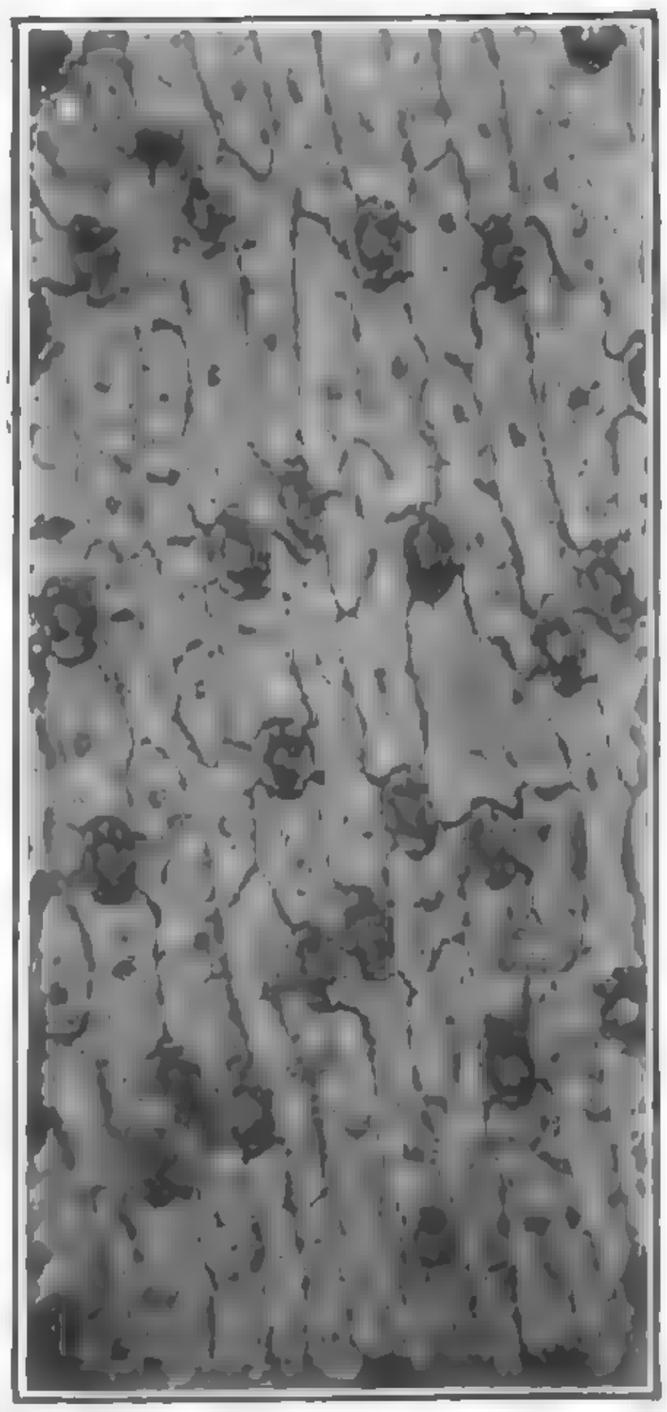


Fig. 14.—The minute pores, or mouths, of the leaf tissues, through which water is passed to the atmosphere. Magnified two hundred and fifty diameters.

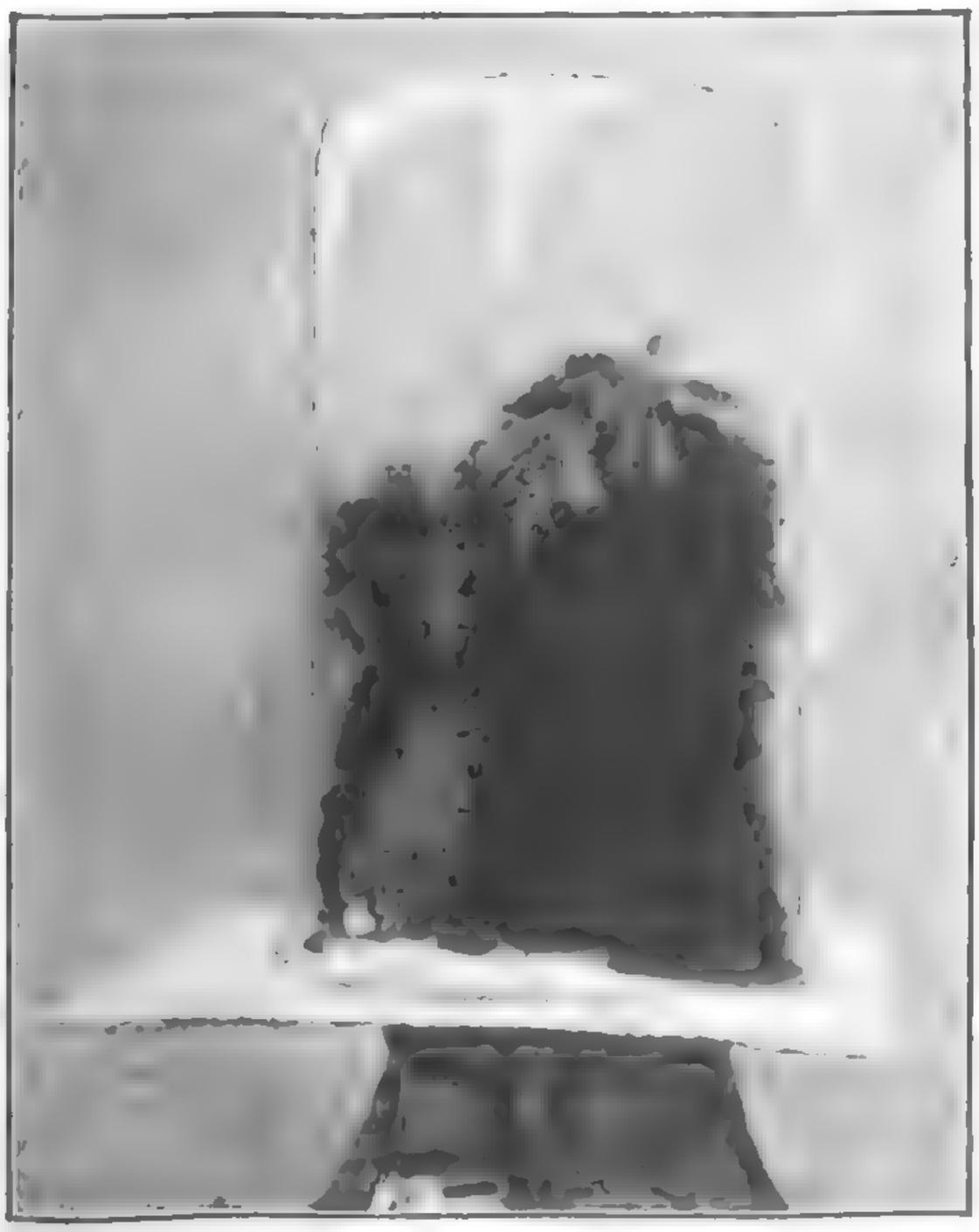


Fig. 15.—Measuring how much water is given off by a known quantity of nettle leaves.

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the penetration of moisture and the consequent rising of the sap is a purely mechanical process, over which the plant itself has no control, so long as the protoplasm of its cells contains more salts and crystal-producing substances than the water outside them. That is where the living cell or root-hair differs from the artificial product of our experiment, for we know very well that the root-hair has full control over the amount of moisture it absorbs. Moreover, it possesses great powers of selection as to what mineral matters it absorbs in solution. Different kinds of plants, although growing together, often require very different food materials. Peas and beans draw largely on lime, grasses select silica, while potatoes and turnips seek potash; and so, more or less, every species of plant differs in its requirements. Furthermore, while these tiny root-hairs absorb water, they also have the power to secrete acids of suitable character to dissolve the particular mineral substances required for the plant food.



Fig. 16.—The stem of the geranium plant has been severed and a piece of glass tubing interposed.

Fig. 17.—Ten days later. Notice that the flowers still continue to develop.

Fig. 18.—On the fifteenth day. The flowers are still developing, but the leaves are deteriorating.

While, therefore, osmosis may act in the plant as a purely physical force, yet it is under the control of the vital force of the living protoplasm within the cell. Indeed, the protoplasm can of its own inherent tendencies so change its substance, by secretion of materials of its own manufacture, that osmotic action may be utilized to the full or made to cease almost entirely. In this manner the root-hair is enabled to control the fluids which it conveys into the plant, and to absorb into its structure only what the life-force within it urges it to gather. The osmotic action of the root-hairs, therefore, becomes a very different matter from the purely physical force exhibited in the experiment of the egg and treacle, and we consequently begin to understand why the different species of plants are enabled to select their food materials, and also to regulate the pressure exerted by the stream of sap within them in such a manner as to build only those structures which their various hereditary tendencies require of them.

Such are the primary forces at work in raising the sap, but there are also living cells in the leaves which play a considerable part in creating a rapid upward flow. Much more water is absorbed by the innumerable little armies of root-hairs below the soil than is used in growth, and this superfluous water

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is evaporated through the pores or stomata of the leaves (Fig. 14). These stomata are often very numerous; a square inch of the under surface of a lilac leaf may contain as many as a hundred and sixty thousand, and the same area of a holly leaf nearly sixty-four thousand, while by way of contrast the mistletoe in the same space possesses only two hundred—but perhaps that is because the mistletoe is a dishonest plant which does not altogether earn its own living. These



Fig. 19.—The same plant producing another flowering branch at the end of ten weeks.

Fig. 20.—Three months later it was in full bloom again, although the branch was weaker.

numerous mouths or pores open under the influence of light and warmth and close during darkness or cold.

Their function is to rapidly evaporate a watery vapour from the leaves into the atmosphere, and they are usually abundant near to where the wood-tubes terminate their course in the leaf structure—as veins. In this manner, during the period of active growth, the stream of sap is encouraged upwards by this rapid transpiration of aqueous vapour, the food materials that it brings with it then being greedily absorbed by the developing cells for the purpose of growth. If, however, the soil becomes chilled so that the young root-hairs cannot absorb moisture, the two "guard-cells" at the mouth of each stoma promptly close, and so reserve the stock of water within the plant tissues. So that in the transpiration of this watery vapour we have another important factor in the elevation of the sap, and which, although purely of a physical character, is yet again controlled by the living action of the tiny guard-cells of the stomata.

The amount of water discharged into the atmosphere by the process of transpiration is very astonishing. Fig. 15 shows two stems of nettles placed in water, the latter being covered by a piece of card to prevent evaporation from the water surface. The leaves, eighteen in all, were then completely covered with a glass vessel and exposed to quiet sunlight for fifteen minutes, by which time the covering glass had become coated with moisture on its interior. The glass was then weighed on a chemical balance, and as its weight was known before the experiment the additional weight of the water could be readily calculated, the result showing that ·3095 grammes of water had passed from the eighteen leaves into the atmosphere during fifteen minutes. With a little further calculation it is easy to show that those same leaves under the same conditions would in slightly under nineteen days evaporate one pint of water. A sunflower of six feet in height, during active growth, is calculated to give off more than a quart of water per day, while the leaves of an oak tree may pass one hundred and fifty gallons or more into the atmosphere during the summer months.

An original and curious experiment which well illustrates the persistence of the upward current of the sap is shown in Figs. 16 to 20, where the stem of a geranium plant is seen severed, with a piece of glass tube interposed, the tube being first filled with water, and then the leaf-bearing stem re-attached, the whole being held together with adhesive tape.

The result of the experiment is shown in the descriptions given beneath the photographs, and the hint may perhaps be useful to florists and gardeners who by accident should break a choice show flower or plant. With the stems placed in water the buds could never mature sufficiently to reach a flowering stage three months ahead, but when connected with the direct sap supply of the root it opens up much greater possibilities. In the experiment great care must be taken not to include an air-bubble in the tube.

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The Affair of the Montagu Diamonds.

By RICHARD MARSH.

Illustrated by J. R. Skelton.

Those of our readers who took so much interest in the previous exploits of Judith Lee, lip-reader, will be glad to find in these pages one more of her adventures.

PASSING through the Embankment Gardens one cold, bleak afternoon in March, I saw a man accost a woman who was some little distance in front of me. As he spoke she turned her head, and, having looked at him, started running as for life. The man stopped, stared after her, and laughed; then, turning on his heels, began to retrace his steps. I saw his face quite clearly. Words which he muttered to himself were framed upon his lips, sufficiently obviously for me to follow them.

"Very well, my dear, you wait a bit. You haven't quite learned your lesson yet."

He was a nondescript-looking sort of person—indeed, although he was, perhaps, not more than thirty, in a sense the whole man showed signs of wear. As he neared me he had the impertinence to smile. I decided that there was something about him which I did not like at all.

When I got on to the Embankment I saw, on the other side of the road, the woman who had run away. She was leaning against the wall beside the river, holding one hand against her side, gasping for breath. My curiosity aroused, I asked her:—

"What's the matter? Are you feeling ill?"

"A man—spoke—to me, and—frightened me—nearly—out of my senses," she answered, brokenly.

"What did he say to you? What sort of man was he?"

"He—was the man—who—was the cause—of all my trouble. I—lost my situation—because of him."

"How was that?"

"He—made them think—I had stolen things, and—I hadn't. They—turned me away—without a character. I—haven't been able—to get—another situation since, and—I'm nearly starving."

I believed her; I had seen hungry women before.

"Come with me," I said; "we'll get something to eat."

I took her to a popular restaurant in the Strand. I had to take her arm in mine to enable her to get as far.

In reply to my questions, she told me that her name was Maggie Harris. She had been a nursery governess in a family named Braithwaite in Camden Town. They lived over a sort of fancy shop, from which they got their living. She had been with them nearly a year. Then things began to be missed, both from the house and the shop. Suspicion began to fasten on her. She herself did not know why. There was an assistant in the shop named Turner. This man made overtures to her, which she resented. One day a number of new goods were missing from the shop. While she was out with the children her master and mistress searched her room; she felt sure it was at Turner's suggestion. The missing articles were found in her box. Her employers turned her out on to the pavement there and then. That was six weeks ago. She had been trying to find other employment ever since, and had failed.

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Her father, she said, was dead. She had a stepmother, who lived near Wisbech, in Cambridgeshire. She left her stepmother's house because of some dispute over a young man. Practically she was without a friend in the world, without a penny, and with no prospects of earning one. So I took her home with me.

I was at that time in occupation of a flat in Sloane Gardens. Fifteen or sixteen days had gone by when, one morning, there was a ringing at my front door, and Miss Marshall came rushing into the sitting-room, where I was at work with Maggie Harris. Miss Agatha Marshall had the flat immediately below mine. She was a rather eccentric person, somewhere in the thirties, who, although possessed of considerable means, found it difficult to induce a servant to stay with her.

"Oh, Miss Lee," she exclaimed, "there have been thieves in my flat. I was alone; they might have cut my throat from ear to ear, and no one would have been any the wiser!"

"Are you quite sure, Miss Marshall, of what you say?"

"Miss Lee," she replied, "they have taken my mother's pearl necklace."

"I expect," I said, "you have mislaid the necklace. You will find it presently, when you have searched again."

"Miss Lee, you don't know what you are talking about." All at once her tone was angry. "Last night I placed it in the biscuit-box. I filled it myself with biscuits and put the necklace at the bottom. Just now, when I went into the dining-room, there were the biscuits on the table, the box



"'OH, MISS LEE,' SHE EXCLAIMED, 'THERE HAVE BEEN THIEVES IN MY FLAT.'"

was empty, and the necklace was gone! And the worst of it is that something woke me in the middle of the night; I couldn't imagine what it was. I lay listening, and I suppose before I made up my mind I dropped off to sleep again. Perhaps it was just as well, because, had I gone into the dining-room and found thieves in the act of robbing me, goodness knows what would have happened."

I gave one or two directions to Maggie Harris and went downstairs with Miss Marshall.

Her story seemed to be correct. The

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pearl necklace did appear to have gone, and other things besides.

The mystery was how the robbery had been effected. Presently we had up Wheeler, the hall porter, and a policeman who was fetched off his beat. Both these persons were of opinion that entry had been gained by the simple process of unlocking the outer door of the lady's flat, while the porter was certain that no suspicious character had entered the building after the lady herself had returned, just before midnight.

When I went back to my own sitting-room I found Maggie Harris still writing. My intention was not to keep her in my employment, but I felt that a month's rest would not do her any harm, and at her request I had given her work of my own to do. The more I saw of the girl the more I liked her.

Directly I appeared she said a very singular thing.

"Wherever I go a robbery immediately follows. It's happened again and again. I'm not a thief. But it seems I might just as well be. You had better have me locked up or turned into the street."

As she looked at me I was struck, not for the first time, by the pallor of her cheeks, her bloodless lips, and her shining eyes. I knew that, while she was not exactly hysterical, she was super-sensitive.

"I take it, Maggie," said I, "that you did not steal Miss Marshall's pearl necklace and the rest of her belongings?"

"I didn't! I didn't! Don't you know I didn't?"

"I never suggested that you did, which makes it harder for me to understand why you should use such extremely foolish words as you did just now." As I saw that words were about to drop from the girl's eager lips I stopped her. "Please don't let us discuss the subject, Maggie. Miss Marshall's losses have nothing to do either with you or with me."

The mystery of the robbery in Miss Marshall's flat remained unsolved. Nothing was heard about the articles which she professed to have lost.

Some ten days after the robbery Wheeler, the porter to the flats, stopped me as I was entering the lift.

"Before I take you up, Miss Lee, if you don't mind, there are one or two things which I should like to say to you."

"What is it, Wheeler?" I asked.

"I was thirty-two last week, Miss Lee," he began, with rather unexpected candour. "My mother died more than twelve months ago, and left me quite a tidy bit of money. I'm going to set up in business on my own account, but before doing so I want a wife, someone who can look after the house and the accounts while I look after the customers and the shop, and, with your permission, Miss Lee, I was thinking of Miss Harris."

I was a little startled as well as amused. He was a big, strong-looking fellow, with an honest face and nice manners.

"Does this mean that you have spoken to Miss Harris, Wheeler?"

"In a manner of speaking, Miss Lee, I have, and also I haven't. She won't listen to me because of a hulking chap with whom she has got herself mixed up, and who, I am dead sure, means her no manner of good."

"This is news to me, Wheeler. I wasn't aware that she had any masculine friends in London."

"She's got two, Miss Lee. She's frightened out of her life at the sight of one, and she ought to be at the sight of the other."

"Are you sure of what you say? How did you find out these things?"

"One afternoon Miss Harris came running in here as if for dear life. She ran up the steps without waiting for the lift, and she cried out: 'Don't you let him touch me!' The very next moment a fair-haired, thinnish, shabby chap appeared in the doorway. 'Here,' I said, 'you can't come in here! What do you want?' His eyes went all over me. I didn't fancy his looks at all. 'Does the young lady who just came in live here?' he asked. 'What young lady?' I said. 'You take yourself off. It's not my business to answer questions asked by chaps like you. If you've got anything to ask, you take yourself to the office and ask it there.'

"Three or four days afterwards Miss Harris went out, as she generally does of an afternoon. I was going out myself. Barr"—that was the name of another porter—"was taking my place. I stood here talking to him with my hat on. I spoke to her as she went past; she paid no more attention to me than if I wasn't there. I don't mind owning that I followed her. There was something about her looks I didn't understand. She walked down to the corner of the Pimlico Road. There she met a tall, thin chap, in a long black overcoat and a big, soft, black felt hat. A motor landaulette was standing by the pavement. He didn't speak to her and she didn't speak to him; they just got in and the thing went off. She came back about six o'clock, looking white and ill, and I could see that she'd been

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crying. 'I hope there's nothing wrong,' I said. She looked at me for a moment or two, as if she couldn't make out who was speaking to her, and then she said, 'Everything's wrong—everything. I wish I'd never been born.'"

Wheeler paused for a second or two, and when he continued his tone was almost oddly serious.

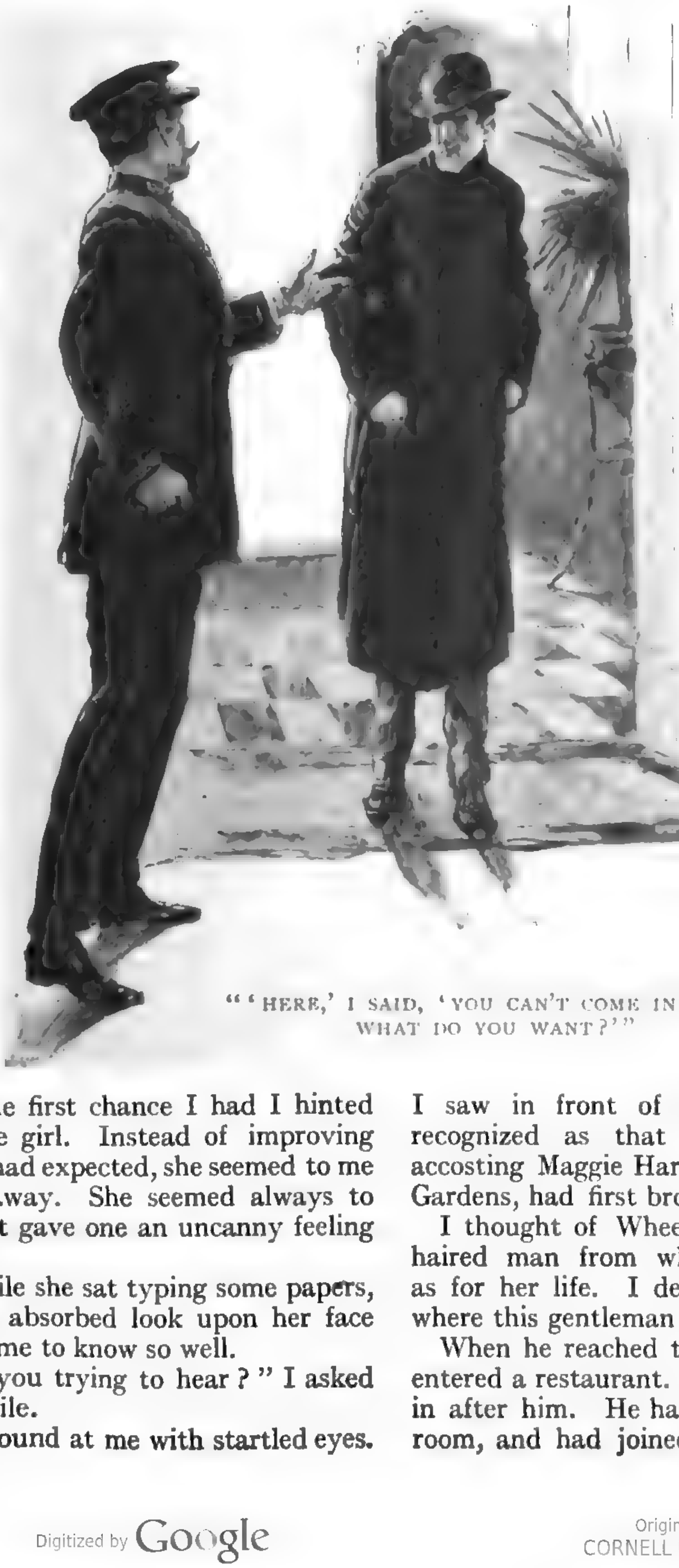
"I've reason to believe, Miss Lee, that she's been to meet that chap twice since then, and each time she's come back in the same condition. My feelings about her being what they are, I thought the best thing I could do would be to speak to you. I've got a feeling for her about which I don't care to say more than I can help. I'm convinced she's the very wife I want, and I'd make her a good husband; if, Miss Lee, you wouldn't mind speaking a word to her."

I liked the man; I liked the girl. I felt that they might not make at all a bad pair. The first chance I had I hinted as much to the girl. Instead of improving in health as I had expected, she seemed to me to be wasting away. She seemed always to be listening; it gave one an uncanny feeling to watch her.

One day, while she sat typing some papers, I noticed that absorbed look upon her face which I had come to know so well.

"What are you trying to hear?" I asked her, with a smile.

She looked round at me with startled eyes.



"'HERE,' I SAID, 'YOU CAN'T COME IN HERE! WHAT DO YOU WANT?'"

"I can't think what it is," she said. "Do you know, I'm always catching myself trying to listen to something—sometimes in the middle of the night—and I always wonder what it is."

I changed the subject by saying:—

"Do you know what I think you want? A husband."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Has Mr. Wheeler never spoken to you, or dropped a hint?"

She was silent. Presently she leaned over the typewriter and covered her face with her hands. Then she stood up and turned to me a face on which there was a mysterious something which was beyond my comprehension.

"You had better kill me—than talk to me like that."

She scarcely spoke above a whisper; then she left the room. The young woman mystified me, gave me curious ideas. I had heard of dual personalities; I was beginning to wonder if hers was such a case.

The following morning I was walking up Sloane Street when I saw in front of me a figure which I recognized as that of the man who, by accosting Maggie Harris in the Embankment Gardens, had first brought her to my notice.

I thought of Wheeler's story of the fair-haired man from whom the girl had fled as for her life. I decided that I would see where this gentleman was going.

When he reached the top of the street he entered a restaurant. I unhesitatingly went in after him. He had gone right down the room, and had joined a man who sat at a

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small table which stood in a sort of alcove. Looking round, I perceived that another small table stood in such a position that, if I occupied a chair at it, I could get a good view of their faces.

The person I had followed was the man of the Embankment Gardens; I had only to get one glimpse of his face to be sure of that. But he was in better fettle than on that first occasion. As regards his companion, he recalled Wheeler's description of the man who had met Maggie Harris at the corner of the Pimlico Road. He was, if anything, a more unpleasant-looking person than the other. He was very dark, with a long, thin face, high cheek-bones, thin lips, and a pair of the most unpleasant eyes I have ever seen in a human head.

Their conversation was carried on, for the most part, in whispers; but they both had those peculiar mobile lips the movements of which are like printed pages to eyes like mine.

The dark man began by asking a question.

"Any news?"

"The best. It will have to be Saturday."

"Why? Any particular reason?"

"A very particular and excellent reason." The fair man leaned over the table so that his lips were closer to the other. "On Friday afternoon he brings home a parcel of diamonds, a bag full of money, and quite a number of other pretty things. The diamonds, the money, and the other pretty things are going to be put in the nice little safe which is let into the wall. There they will remain in quiet and safe seclusion while our Mr. Albert Montagu and his dear little wife run down to Brighton for the week-end. So now you see, my dear Professor Argus, why it will have to be Saturday—and that's where you come in. I suppose you will be able to come in?"

The dark man's features were contorted by a smile which did not appeal to me at all.

"I have her under my finger as I have that crumb; I can do with her as I please."

"You're a remarkable man, Professor," the fair man observed; "but—this is a pretty remarkable thing you're proposing to do."

"Is it any more remarkable than the other things? There was a certain pearl necklace. Wasn't it pretty remarkable how it came into our possession, without either of us moving a finger or incriminating ourselves in any way?"

"I dare say. But it does seem as if there were going to be unusual features about this little job. She's got to enter the place with a pass-key; she's also got to open a complicated safe with a very delicate and ingenious little instrument. That would take some doing if she were wide awake; in the state in which she will be it will be dashed difficult. I can't help thinking that nothing could be easier than for her to make a little mistake, and the slightest slip, from our point of view, would be fatal, because if she spoilt our tool—which she probably would do—she'd be done, and, what would be worse, so should we."

"You say you know the safe?"

"I do. At least, so far as the lock's concerned, I've got its double; it cost a pretty penny."

"Good! And you've got the key which will open it?"

"I have; you saw it yourself—both the lock and the key."

"And you saw her rehearse; you saw her take that key into her hand and open that lock without my saying a word?"

"I did; it was a wonderful performance. You are a wonderful chap, Professor."

"Then why do you worry? I've got that girl, body and soul. You may take it from me that if you've got your part of the business right, that little matter will come off on Saturday."

"Professor, you really are a marvel—here's to you, my boy. It was a stroke of luck my getting on her track again; and her having found such a comfortable home with our dear, tender-hearted, charitable Miss Judith Lee."

As I sat there following the conversation of those two scamps the whole diabolical conspiracy was plain to me before they had finished. They went first. I remained after they had gone, doing my best to decide on what would be the proper course to pursue. At last I came to the conclusion that the wisest thing for me to do would be to go to Dr. Riderman—so I went.

On the way I stopped at a public telephone call-office, rang up Scotland Yard, and requested Inspector Ellis to meet me at Dr. Riderman's residence in Harley Street in the shortest possible space of time.

Horace Riderman is not only a great surgeon; he is also one of the leading authorities on certain psychological aspects of disease. Shortly after reaching Dr. Riderman's house Inspector Ellis was ushered in. I introduced them.

"Inspector Ellis—Dr. Riderman. I wish to tell you gentlemen a little story, and then to ask your advice—probably, also, your assistance."

I told them the story of my first meeting

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with Maggie Harris, and of the man from whom she had fled; of the account she had given me of herself; of how I had taken her to my home, and of what had followed. When I came to the robbery of Miss Marshall's pearl necklace Inspector Ellis interposed.

"It didn't come actually into my hands, but I remember hearing of that. I believe that, so far, the thief has not been found, nor the pearls either."

I said that was so. Then I described the effect the robbery had had upon Maggie Harris.

"Dr. Riderman," I continued, "the girl has been hypnotized. She's a hypnotic subject. That, to my mind, explains everything."

"If that is the case, Miss Lee, I can only ask for details."

Then I told of the interview which I had just witnessed in the restaurant, and of the conversation which followed.

"You remember that the girl told me that she had left her stepmother's house because of a dispute she had had over a young man. My theory is that the man who caused trouble with her stepmother, the man who met her in the Pimlico Road, and the Professor Argus, to whom I have just been introduced in the restaurant, are one and the same person. He probably found out quite early the power he had over her. That power has grown with the years, her capacity of resistance being so slight, until now, as I just now saw him say, he can do as he likes with her. This is a case, doctor, of hypnosis by suggestion."

"Is that sort of thing really possible?" asked the inspector.

I waved my hand towards the surgeon. "Ask Dr. Riderman."

"It's certainly possible; indeed, it is not easy, in the light of our present information, to say what in such cases is impossible. How far do your theories intend to go, Miss Lee? Are you asking us to believe that, at the suggestion of this man, Professor Argus, she took Miss Marshall's pearls?"

"I make no positive assertion. I'm merely here to tell you of a conversation which has just taken place. The man Turner spoke of persons named Montagu. Now, on the first floor in my block of flats there is a Mr. Montagu, and he has a wife. He is a diamond merchant in Hatton Garden. It is his habit to bring home parcels of diamonds. He once told me that a parcel he had in his hand was worth nearly fifteen thousand pounds. When I asked what he did, in his flat, to ensure the safety of such valuable property he replied that there was a little hiding-place close to his hand where it would be as safe as in the Bank of England. That suggests the safe of which the man Turner spoke, and the instrument in the nature of a key with which the girl is to open it."

"Do you mean to say," struck in the inspector, "that a girl in the condition in which, according to you, Miss Harris is to be, could, with any instrument whatever, open so complicated a piece of mechanism as the lock of a really good burglar-proof safe?"

"That, again, is a point on which I prefer to say nothing. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Montagu are in the habit of going away for the week-end. If it is the intention of those two ingenious gentlemen that, while in a state of hypnosis, Maggie Harris is to make a burglarious entrance into their flat, nothing is easier than that you, and the doctor here, and I should be there to see. We need not interfere—we can just stand and watch. Afterwards, when she hands over to the arch-villain the plunder which he has made her take—that will be the moment for us to move. What is your opinion, Dr. Riderman?"

"I think, in the first place, it's a very remarkable story, Miss Lee. Dr. Milne Bramwell tells us of a woman who, being told while in a state of hypnosis to do a certain thing at a certain hour in a certain way, several days afterwards, being released from her hypnotic trance, did that exact thing, at the exact moment, exactly as required, without being conscious that such a suggestion had ever been made. I have seen that sort of thing myself more than once. I think your notion, Miss Lee, that we should be on the spot to see if she really does is not at all a bad one."

And we were there, all three of us—and another, making four. The fourth person was Edward Wheeler; in my scheme he was essential.

"I'll be there—you may depend on me, Miss Lee."

On the Friday afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Montagu got into a cab and were driven away. Wheeler had been informed that the servants had been given a week-end holiday, and that the flat was to be shut up. So far the man Turner's forecast of their movements had proved correct.

During the early part of the Saturday I noticed that Maggie Harris seemed to be in an acutely sensitive frame of mind. Towards evening she grew restless. She kept giving

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what seemed to be involuntary movements, as if suffering from a sense of physical discomfort. Soon after ten o'clock she went to bed; ten minutes afterwards I went to the telephone and rang up Dr. Riderman. In less than half an hour he appeared with Inspector Ellis.

We three sat in my room waiting and watching. At one o'clock Wheeler came upstairs and joined us.

"Is everyone in?" I asked. He replied in the affirmative.

It was just past two o'clock before anything happened. We were in my sitting-room; the door was open; Dr. Riderman said that if the girl were really in a state of hypnosis she would not notice such a trifle as the fact that my sitting-room lights were shining out into the passage. All at once the doctor held up a forefinger.

"A handle is being turned. Which is her room?"

"It's the next but one to this." I listened. In the utter silence a faint sound was just perceptible. Soft footsteps came along the passage, then a figure passed my door.

"It's she," I whispered; "and I believe she's dressed."

"Why shouldn't she be?" observed the doctor. "Do you think he'd be such a fool as to let her walk about the place in her night-dress?"

Someone had gone along the passage and opened my front door. We all rose.

"Now, recollect what I tell you," said the doctor. "If I think it safe to speak I'll let you know; till I do, be as still as you can. If he has her well in hand there'll be no risk of our being seen; so far as we are concerned she will be stone-blind."

When we got out on to the landing she was moving softly down the stone staircase.

"Do you mean to say," whispered the inspector, "that she doesn't know what she's about? She moves as if she were in possession of all her senses."

"Wait a bit," replied the doctor, "and you'll see."

He spoke louder than the inspector. At that moment the girl, pausing, put the fingers of her left hand up to her cheek and seemed to listen.

"She heard you," whispered the inspector.

"She didn't; she may have received a suggestion from someone who is at goodness knows what distance from this; she never heard me. I'll prove it to you presently. Unless I'm mistaken, this is the most remarkable case of hypnosis by suggestion that I've ever witnessed."

Maggie Harris descended those four flights of stone steps, holding herself very upright, well in the centre, with as much assurance—in Inspector Ellis's words—as if she had been in possession of all her senses. When she reached the first-floor landing, pausing in front of Mr. Montagu's flat, taking a key out of the bosom of her frock, with it she opened the door, as steadily and surely as if she had been wide awake. We had followed her—a curious quartet—from step to step, without her once looking round.

"Where did she get that key from?" inquired Wheeler, as the Montagus' door yielded to her touch. "There are only two other keys which fit that lock besides Mr. Montagu's: one I've got, and the other is in the office."

"That's a master-key which she has," murmured Ellis. "The man who is handling her is an artist. He's seen that she's provided with proper tools, and nothing's easier, if you know how to set about it, than to provide oneself with a master-key which will open every door in a block of London flats."

Dr. Riderman had hurried through the open door, and I was at his heels. Behind me was Inspector Ellis, with Wheeler in the rear. One thing we noticed at once: the girl had not switched on the light.

"That shows the state she's in—light and darkness are the same to her."

As he said this the doctor himself switched on the light. There she was, threading her way among the tables and chairs as if she could see them perfectly well—yet she did not give the slightest sign that she was conscious of the amazing change which had taken place when the doctor touched that electric switch.

Maggie Harris passed from the sitting-room to the bedroom. Some little time before Mrs. Montagu had been ill in bed. I had visited her on several occasions, but had seen nothing to suggest that a safe was in the room. Yet the girl, who, I should certainly say, had never been there before, went straight to it. There were twin beds in the room; the wall between them was covered with hangings. Maggie drew one of these aside, touched a spring, and a hinged panel flew back; behind was a small safe painted green. She did something to the lock, very much as a blind person feels for the Braille type with the tips of the fingers, then she inserted something into the key-hole, went through some further mysterious

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performances with the tips of her fingers, turned with the greatest of ease the something which she had put into the lock, and the safe was open. Within was a small black leather bag—we were within a few feet of her and could see it plainly. She opened it, took out a little paper parcel, a canvas bag, and a packet of papers ; shut it, closed the door of the safe, returned the hinged panel ; then, wheeling round, moved



"MAGGIE TOUCHED A SPRING, AND A HINGED PANEL FLEW BACK."

straight towards us. She came so close to me that I had to draw back to prevent actual contact. Her head was erect, her eyes open, but the pupils were fixed. I had seen hypnotized persons before that night ; I recognized that I was looking at one then. We held our breath and she went by, though if we had made a noise it would have made no difference. Dr. Riderman proved it by exclaiming, just as she was passing into the sitting-room :—

"Young lady ! Miss Harris !"

Obviously unaware that a sound had been uttered, she continued her progress across the sitting-room, passed through the hall door, and shut it in our faces. That was certainly unlooked for. Inspector Ellis, for one, was visibly disconcerted.

"After all," he cried, "the whole thing may be a trap. What fools we shall look ! If she's locked it from the outside she may be clear away with her spoils before we can get out."

"Yes ; but as it happens it isn't locked on the outside," observed Wheeler. He showed it by pressing back the latch, and the door was wide open.

Ellis was first on the landing, but we were soon after him. There was the girl, two flights above us. We re-entered my flat, the girl in front, we four behind.

"Now, what's to be done ?" asked Ellis. "That piece of sugar-paper she's carrying is a parcel of diamonds. As your friend said, Miss Lee, there may be fifteen thousand pounds' worth. There's money in that canvas bag which she's got in her left hand ; by the look of it, quite a decent sum. Those papers she's carrying may be valuable securities. Hadn't we at once better make sure that they're safe ?"

"If by that you mean," I replied, "that you'd like to take them from her, I will

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remind you that what we want to do is to make sure of the scoundrel who has engineered all this. The only way to do that is to catch him with that stolen property in his possession. We want to establish her innocence, to make it clear that she's the helpless victim of a nefarious plot, and, what is not least, remove her from his influence."

"All I want to do is to make sure that the valuables are safeguarded," said the inspector.

"I'll make sure of that," I told him. "I promise you that nothing which she has taken from Mr. Montagu's flat shall pass out of mine without your knowledge. If you like, you might leave a man here to keep an eye on things; I don't think it would be a bad idea if you did. But you've only seen the first act of the drama. Be here in good time to-morrow, and I fancy you'll see the second act—and the end. What you'll have to do will be to arrest Professor Argus and his confederate, the man Turner."

The next day was Sunday. Maggie Harris rose at the usual hour; she seemed tired and depressed, as if her night's rest had done her little good. At half-past ten she started out to church; so far as I was concerned, her Sundays were her own. While she was getting ready I opened her bedroom door to ask her a question. As I did so I was struck by the oddity of her manner. I spoke to her twice without her seeming to take any notice of what I said.

I put on my hat and gloves, sent a message over the telephone, and waited for her to go out. When I heard her bedroom door open I went out into the passage. She walked right past me without seeming to take any heed of my presence. She had a prayer-book in one hand and a green leather hand-bag in the other. I jumped to a conclusion.

"Mr. Montagu's property is in that bag. She's going to meet that—that creature."

I followed her down the staircase. Dr. Riderman and Wheeler were in the hall, the latter in mufti. Both of them took off their hats to salute her as she appeared, an attention on their part which she utterly ignored. We all three followed her as she went out into the street. Inspector Ellis, in plain clothes, was on the other side of the road. Without crossing to us, he moved in the direction in which she was going.

"You'll find she's going to the corner of the Pimlico Road," said Wheeler to me. "I believe that's where she always does go; that's where he always meets her. If I could only get within comfortable reach of him——"

He stopped—in time. His agitation was obvious. Dr. Riderman deemed it necessary to address to Wheeler a warning word.

"Don't you let yourself go; control yourself, my lad. You leave the conduct of this business to others."

We were nearing the end of Lower Sloane Street when Inspector Ellis motioned to us from his side of the road. We stopped short, letting the girl go on. The inspector, on his side of the road, strolled carelessly on. Crossing the street, the girl disappeared round the corner. The inspector vanished too. In another moment the inspector reappeared; when he beckoned to us we moved forward. A taxi-cab was standing by the kerb. The inspector explained.

"She's in that motor-car with the Professor, as you say he calls himself." We could see that a closed car was moving rapidly. "In you get; this cab's mine."

We got in; the cab started. The inspector continued to explain.

"Some of our men are shadowing our friend in front. I don't propose to take him single-handed."

The cab ran over Ebury Bridge into Warwick Street, turning into what I afterwards learnt was Alderney Street, then suddenly stopped. We were on the pavement in an instant.

"There's that other motor going off in front," observed the driver. "It's put the pair down. There is the girl turning into Sussex Street. She don't seem well. The man has gone into the house four doors from this; I fancy the door must have been kept open for him—he slipped in so fast."

Four men were coming towards us down the street.

"There are my chaps," said Ellis. "What we've got to do is to get into that house before the Professor gets out of it—perhaps by a back door. For the moment we'll leave the girl to herself."

This did not appeal to Wheeler at all, for he made a rapid movement towards the street into which the girl had turned. We approached the house of which the driver had spoken.

Inspector Ellis had in his hand a key, which he inserted into the keyhole, and which opened the door as easily as if it had been made for it. An elderly woman was in the hall.

"Who are you?" she asked. "What do you want? What do you mean by coming into my house without knocking?"

There came a sound from somewhere above, as if a heavy piece of furniture had fallen. Thrusting the woman aside, the inspector

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ran up the stairs with us at his heels. There were two doors on the first landing, which he threw wide open; then, turning, sprang up three more stairs which were on the left, to a door beyond. He turned the handle—then exclaimed:—

"The door's locked. He's in here. Pankhurst, drive this door open."

A great, big man, one of the four who had met us outside, went rushing forward, and by the mere force of his impetus carried the door away as if it were so much matchwood. In another second we were all of us swarming into the room. Then I heard someone shout:—

"Look out! He's going to jump through the window."

Just as I entered the man whom I had heard addressed as Professor Argus jumped, before anyone could stop him. There was an old-fashioned French window leading on to a little balcony; it was open when I got into the room. I saw a tall figure pass through it, then vanish. One of the inspector's men, running on to the balcony, looked over the low railing.

"He must have struck the spikes of the railings and fallen on the wrong side to the bottom of the area. He's lying all of a heap."

Inspector Ellis's voice, as he replied to this information, was cold and official.

"Two of you men go down and look after him." He turned to someone else who was in the room. "You are my prisoner; if you are a wise man you won't make any fuss."

The man addressed did not look as though he were likely to make what the inspector called a fuss—it was Turner, from whom Maggie Harris had fled in the Embankment Gardens, and whom I had seen concocting his hideous plot in the restaurant. His confederate was dead, the arch-criminal. Whether his intention was to commit suicide, or merely to make a wild effort to escape from the police, was not clear. In his pockets were that whitey-brown paper parcel which we had seen Maggie Harris take out of Mr. Montagu's safe, and which contained a large number of uncut diamonds; the canvas bag, in which there were nearly a hundred pounds in gold, besides bank-notes; and the bundle of papers. The two keys—the master-key with which the girl had opened the outer door, and the ingenious instrument with which she had manipulated the lock of the safe—were actually found in Turner's hands.



"ONE OF THE INSPECTOR'S MEN RAN ON TO THE BALCONY."

When I returned to Sloane Gardens I found Maggie Harris in my sitting-room crying as if her heart would break; and by her side, doing his best to offer her consolation, was the hall porter.

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MY BILLIARDS.

And the Strokes That Made It.

By JOHN ROBERTS.

ILLUSTRATED BY AN ENTIRELY NEW METHOD.

[The photographs accompanying the text constitute the unique feature of these articles. Each stroke was set up on his own standard table by Mr. John Roberts personally, and the lines of white worsted illustrating the run of the balls — of ivory, standard size and equal weight — were placed in position by him. The spot on the cue-ball shows the exact place where that ball must be struck to make the stroke depicted, and the line running from the cue-ball to the object-ball shows the line of aim for the stroke.]

PART I.

CONCERNING CUEMANSHIP AND PLAIN-BALL STROKES.

BEFORE proceeding to deal with the strokes shown in the remarkable photographs illustrating this article, I deem it necessary to say something about the general principles of cuemanship. My views on this subject are decidedly broad. I have no sympathy with those professors who desire to cast cuemen all in one mould. The right thing to do is for each man to adapt his own physical attributes to certain general principles. The legs should be planted firmly yet gracefully, with the right leg straight and the left leg advanced just far enough and the left knee just bent enough to enable a player to get down to his game without the least strain or effort. I am no believer in poses which make people look like racing cyclists when shaping for a stroke at billiards. It is decidedly a contentious matter whether anything is gained in accuracy by a crouching stance, and the loss of grace and comfort is obvious and undeniable.



NO. I. MY "BRIDGE" HAND.

Next comes the all-important placing of the left hand on the table. This must be done properly, and the photograph (No. 1) of my bridge hand shows the right way to do it. The "bridge" thus formed is firm, but there is nothing of the tense rigidity about it advocated by those who would fain make a billiard-player claw at the cloth to keep the left hand steady. To my mind, there is nothing stiff about billiards, nothing laboured and heavy. My ideal billiard-player faces his work with every muscle elastic and ready to respond to his will. His poise is full of the elegance of latent power, and is at the same time steadiness personified. The least tendency to wobble is fatal, and the player must remember not to wriggle the upper part of his body in the attempt to re-sight a shot. He must move his feet first, and thus get the foundation right before settling himself down afresh to his stroke.

Next comes the matter of holding a cue correctly. Much has been written on this subject. Some experts advise budding cuemen to hold the cue between the thumb and forefinger only; others allow the use of two

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fingers and the thumb, while some commend making a sort of loop with all the fingers and the thumb, and allowing the cue to rest at *will* on the most convenient portion of this loop, which will invariably be towards the front of it. My advice is to decide on whichever of these methods comes most natural and easy; but when a decision is made, do not vary it. Chopping and changing in matters of stance, making a bridge, and holding a cue has spoilt more billiard-players than enough. Men see a great player manipulate a cue in his own way, and try to copy him. They always fail, because what they strive to imitate is only some superficial and personal trick of cuemanship peculiar to the master they are copying. The general underlying principle, the one thing that matters, is always missed by the untrained observer. And as regards holding a cue, that principle is summed up in the one word "lightness"—I might almost have written "daintiness." A man who takes a billiard-cue in hand is holding an implement capable of as much variety of execution as a bow in the hands of a skilled violinist, and anything hard and constrained is utterly antagonistic to the artistic soul of the thing. The cue should never be gripped when shaping for a stroke or when it is swung for a stroke. There are occasions when an instantaneous gripping of the cue is necessary at the right moment, and I will deal with these occasions in their proper place.

A correct holding of the cue is inseparable from that smooth and accurate cue delivery which is the underlying and unvarying first principle of all billiards. Every great billiard-player, without exception, no matter what his individual eccentricities of stance or action may be, always delivers his cue with irreproachable freedom and accuracy. In other words, at that infinitesimal fraction of time when the cue-tip comes into contact with a billiard-ball all great billiardists are absolutely alike. Temperament, nerves, judgment, and natural aptitude for the game account for the differences between them. One and all strike a billiard-ball perfectly, or they would never play well enough for anyone to pay sixpence to see them perform. Cue delivery is to the billiard-player what timing a ball is to a cricketer, timing a blow to a boxer, or timing a kick to a footballer. Doing it rightly or wrongly makes all the difference between the waste and use of energy, between a dull, lifeless result and an achievement aglow with brilliance and vitality.

Hold the cue lightly, then, swing it straight from the elbow, and let it run on with a smooth, even, flowing action until, at the instant it reaches its nearest approach to the horizontal, the tip strikes the cue-ball on the desired spot. Then let the cue go through the ball, except for screw strokes—and even for these it must get well hold of the sphere. Do not hold the cue more or less as if it were a broom-handle and push or poke it at the ball. Throwing the cue at the ball is much nearer the right thing to do. In fact, it is possible, as an exhibition effort only, to discard the use of the thumb of the right hand, rest the cue-butt on the fingers only, and make stroke after stroke by the sheer momentum of the cue. This is not to be practised, not even for a single stroke; I have only quoted it to show what can be done by permitting the weight and swing of the cue to have full and unrestricted play to the uttermost extent. This swing, which comes from the elbow in all except the few hard-hitting strokes which make a call on the swing of the whole of the cue-arm from the shoulder, is the one indispensable primary essential for billiard-playing. A lucky few have it as a natural gift, but the vast majority must acquire it by study and practice.

They must persevere until they can bring the cue-tip into contact with a ball without the least trace of heaviness due to gripping the butt, of a see-sawing up-and-down movement, or of a sideways waggle. Not until then will they begin to play billiards with any hope of practice making perfect. If their cue delivery is wrong, the more they play the worse they will play after reaching that extremely limited degree of proficiency which enables them to make, at uncertain intervals, a few strokes in their own way and many flukes—also in their own way. Given a correct cue delivery, the next point is to align the cue with due regard both to the spot on the cue-ball it is desired to strike and the point of contact between the cue-ball and its object. The whole business then becomes a mechanical certainty, so mechanical that even sight can be dispensed with.

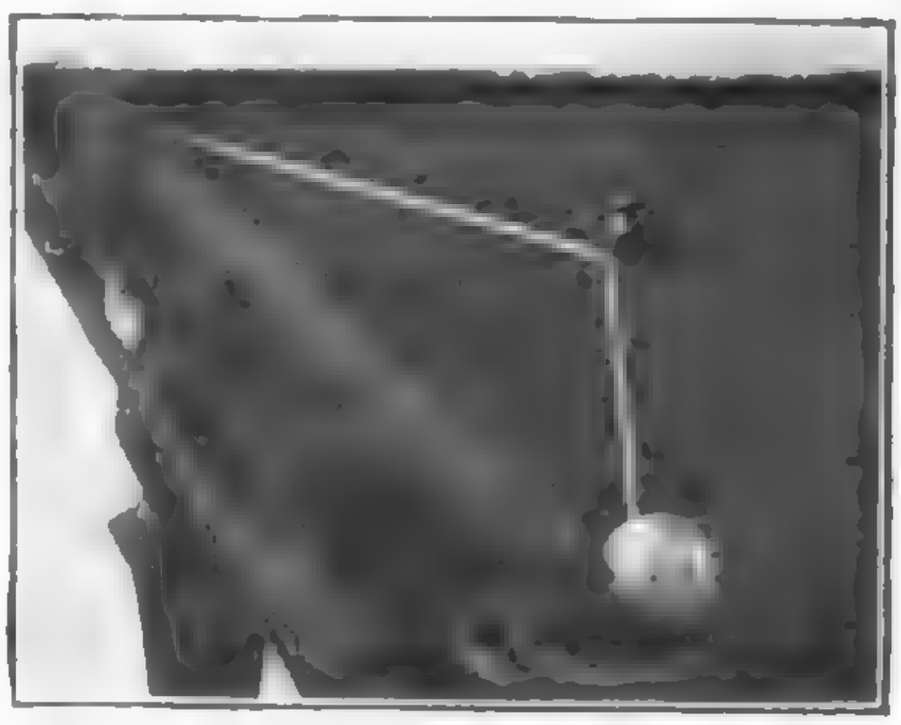
A favourite exhibition trick of my father's took the form of sighting a stroke, swinging his cue back, and then turning his head and looking away from the balls when actually making the score. Again I do not advise my readers to experiment for an instant with such a dangerous departure from the orthodox in the hands of anybody except a past-master of the game who took trouble enough to acquire the knack. But how well the thing shows just what accurate cue delivery really means! If the cue hand and arm of my father had not been

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trained to an extent which enabled him to deliver his cue with mechanical precision, his trick of playing a stroke for pure sport without looking at the balls at the instant of cue contact would have been a dead failure. As it was, he seldom missed a stroke he chose to play in this way, and his prowess in this direction, although it may have erred on the side of the whimsical, according to modern ideas on the seriousness of sport, was nevertheless an indisputable exhibition of what can be left with perfect safety to cue delivery of the highest order. The strenuous struggles of so many "hundred-uppers" to make a twenty break once in a way show what cannot be done almost entirely on account of cue delivery as full of faults as it very well can be.

It is a capital idea to practise cue delivery by swinging the cue over a straight line on the table without putting up a ball to distract the attention. Take pains with this. Settle down comfortably into the stance you have decided to adopt — it would be well to have it criticized by a good player, if possible. Then swing the cue backwards and forwards over the bridge hand, and keep striking at a ball which exists only in fancy. The number of little preliminary swings made before delivering the cue is a matter each player must decide for himself, but the fewer the better, as the practice tends to tire the hand and eye by a series of movements which precede the actual stroke. Some players, including myself, can make strokes by simply drawing the cue back and delivering it without more ado. But there are others, especially beginners, who will find a few preliminary swings helpful, as they enable the stroke to be rehearsed, so to speak, before the cue is brought into contact with the ball. When practice gives confidence, these little cue movements should be discarded as far as possible. They constitute something a billiard-player has first to learn and then forget as his game advances. Keep the body perfectly still when practising these cue exercises. Only the right arm should move; the right hand should be kept as close to the side of the body as possible, and the cue should be delivered over and over again on a line directly beneath the centre of the chin of the cueman. The player can see for himself whether the cue is kept straight over the line, and it is a good plan to have a candid friend standing by his side to note the least jerkiness or lack of freedom, and also to find fault if the cue is not as level as it can be when the tip is supposed to come in contact with that imaginary ball.

I have now finished my opening remarks on the art of cuemanship. They must be read carefully and mastered in practice before any strokes are attempted, or I cannot be responsible for the result. My strokes may fairly be likened to a number of targets, and cuemanship alone is the rifle which enables the bull's-eye to be hit every time. The illustration is by no means far-fetched, and I trust it will serve to bring home to the minds of every reader the vital importance of an accomplishment so often neglected with dire results. One-ball practice should follow the cue exercises. Place the spot-ball so that the black dot on the sphere is exactly in its centre. Deliver the cue on that spot, and play the ball from baulk straight up the centre of the table. Stick to it until the ball returns at a variety of strengths direct over the line of spots which marks the middle of the table. This cannot be done in ten minutes. It demands a fair amount of practice with set purpose, but it must be mastered, as central striking of the cue-ball, in conjunction with a half-ball contact with the object-ball, gives us our known quantity in billiards from which is computed every other stroke in the game.

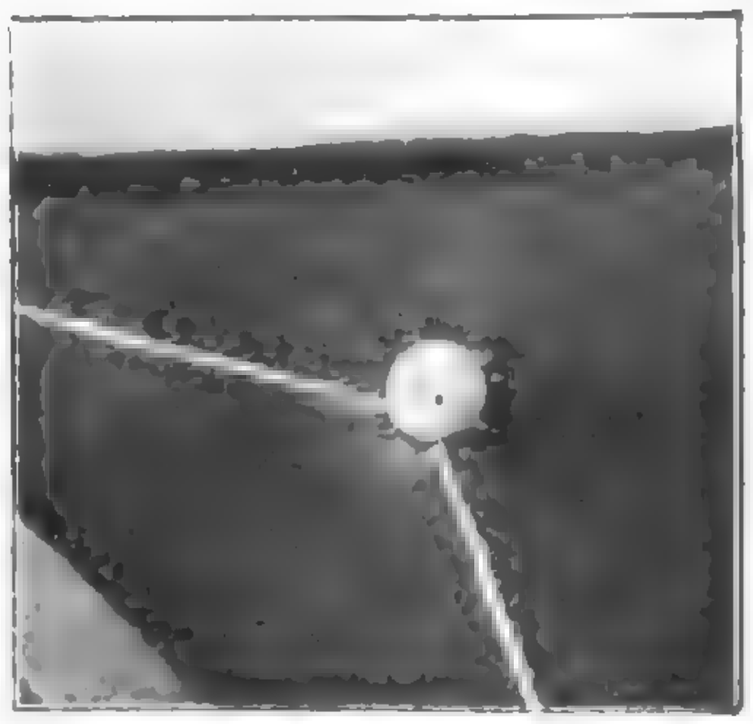


NO. 2. A FAMILIAR HALF-BALL LOSING HAZARD.

Our second photograph illustrates a familiar half-ball losing hazard. Note where the white line ends exactly on the outside edge of the red ball, and see the spot in the middle of the cue-ball. Bring the cue to bear on that spot and make the centre of the white ball trave straight and true towards the outside edge o the object, and the hazard into the opposite to pocket is sure to be made. The actual contac of the balls is shown in our next illustratio (No. 3), and it should be noted carefull that this stroke ought invariably to be playe with just sufficient strength to bring the re ball into position for a losing hazard from han into the middle pocket on the opposite sid of the table to the player. Such positiona control of the red ball is not very difficult t acquire. This is one of the few strokes whic

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an ordinary amateur may be reasonably expected to handle in every respect as well as a professional; and as, with slight variations, it is constantly occurring in actual play, it is most decidedly a stroke which should be practised assiduously from each side of the table until both the hazard and correct after-position are thoroughly mastered.



NO. 3. THE BALL-TO-BALL CONTACT FOR THE HALF-BALL LOSER.

Our next illustration (No. 4) is of exceptional interest, as it depicts the permissible margin of error in the half-ball stroke. A close inspection will prove that the inside edge of the white ball is at the moment of contact the merest shade beyond the centre of the red, and it therefore follows that the centre of the cue-ball must have been directed just that indescribably minute fraction of space away from the absolute outside edge of the red and towards the centre of that ball. This much, and no more, may be done at normal pace without affecting the natural angle to any appreciable extent in actual billiards, although I dare say it is not without its effect in pure theory. But in the other direction there is no margin of error allowable. If, in general billiard parlance, the contact is in the least "finer" than a half-ball, the natural angle cannot result, and many amateurs fail to make long losers from hand simply on account of this fault. When a true half-ball is presented into a pocket fairly close to the cue-ball, then, provided the pocket is an open one, a slightly finer contact than half-ball will score, incidentally, with a bad stroke. But the "long ones" supply the real test. Those beautiful free strokes which bring the object-ball round off three cushions when played from hand off a ball on the centre spot, or very near it, cannot be made if a cue-ball without side strikes the object too thin; but, I repeat, there is a slight margin offered in the other direction. Therefore, when playing half-ball strokes, always make sure you bring about a thick enough contact, whatever you do.



NO. 4. THE PERMISSIBLE MARGIN OF ERROR IN THE HALF-BALL STROKE.

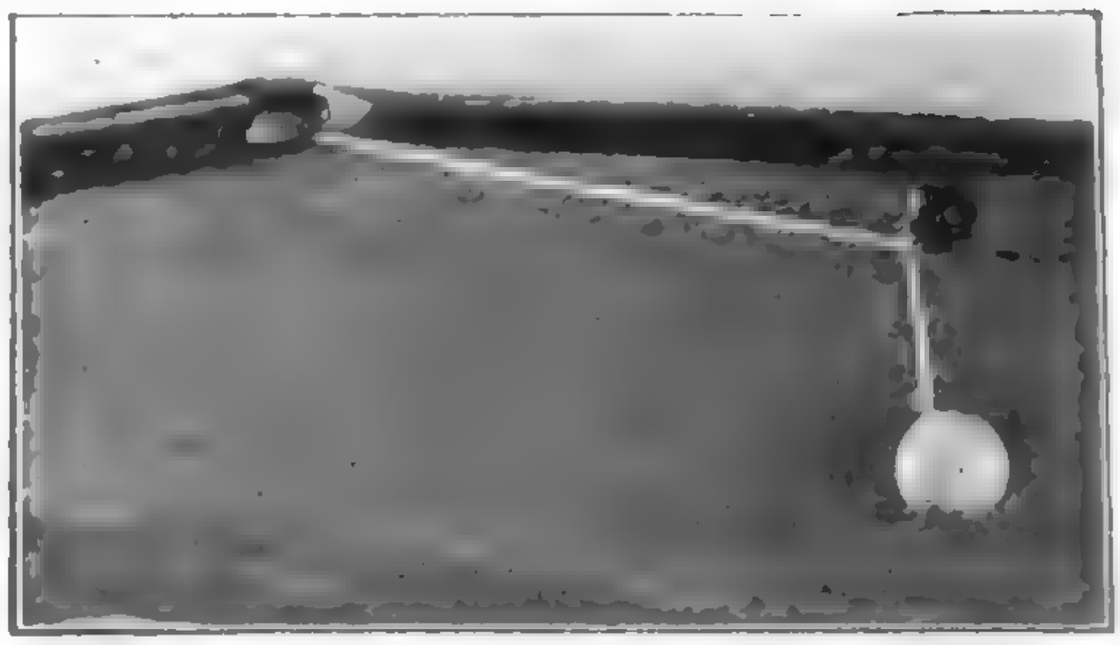
While I am on the subject of permissible errors in the half-ball stroke, I propose to deal with another connected, not with ball contact, but with the point struck on the cue-ball. As I have so often explained, the natural angle resulting from a half-ball contact is made by striking the cue-ball in its centre. But the stroke is the same for all practical purposes even if the cue-ball is struck decidedly above its horizontal centre. For some half-ball strokes, especially when the balls lie close for the type of stroke, cue contact above the centre of the ball played with is useful, as dead central ball-striking may not impart enough forward rotation to give full life to the stroke. But there is always this point to be remembered. The strikable surface of the cue-ball is none too great, and is really much less than is often supposed, and as the cue-tip approaches nearer and nearer to the top of the ball it becomes more and more difficult to keep on that vertical centre of the sphere the least departure from which imparts that side or bias which ruins plain-ball strokes.

A mental picture of a wedge conveys my meaning very well. The broad base of the wedge represents the horizontal centre of the cue-ball, and as it tapers away to nothing it shows that the dimension of the strikable surface presented to the cue-tip dwindles rapidly to vanishing point. And as it dwindles it renders the task of bringing the cue-point exactly on the vertical centre of the ball increasingly difficult, and makes the probability of imparting unintentional but nevertheless fatal side a risk which grows in proportion according to the distance the cue-ball is struck above its horizontal centre.

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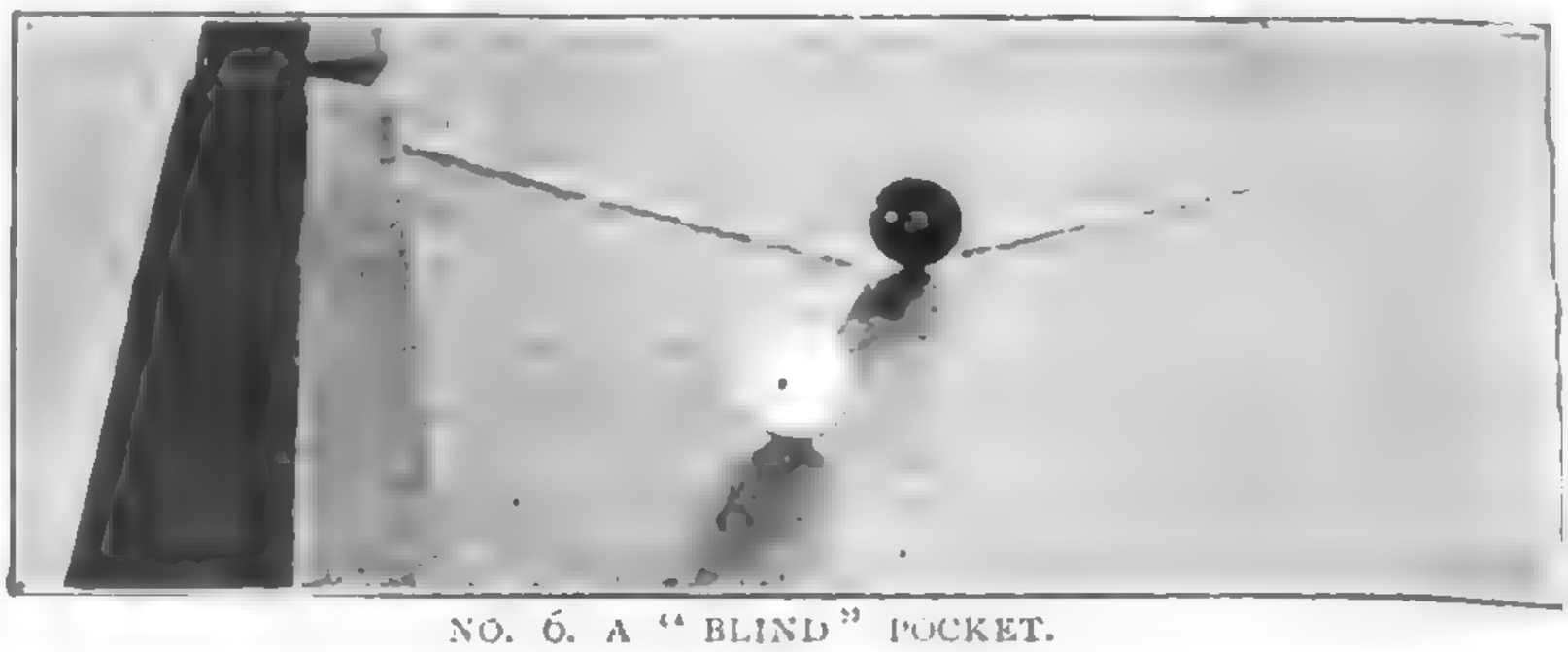
The same general argument holds good as regards every stroke on a billiard-table. Ignoring flukes, there are always three distinct possibilities inseparable from every stroke. It may be missed, it may be made perfectly, or it may be made in spite of a margin of imperfection which varies enormously in different strokes. The first two are fixed quantities, but the third differs with every separate grouping of the balls. But it always has its distinct and absolute limitations, which are usually small, and often so minute as to be a negligible quantity in practice. The good player takes no liberties with the permissible margin of imperfection in stroke play; the bad player leans on it so heavily that he would throw up billiards in disgust but for its existence. Obviously the right thing to do is to play every stroke in such a way that the possibility of error becomes eliminated by the application of known rules, the first and greatest of which governs plain-ball striking and the half-ball contact which gives us the natural angle depicted in our photographs.

This angle is not always easily recognized at first sight, as the two following photographs prove. The first (No. 5) shows a typical half-ball losing hazard into a corner pocket, and the man who has yet to learn his billiards —which may easily be true of many who have played for years—would hardly credit that it is exactly the same shot as that presented by our first score off the spotted red. Yet such is the fact, and it is harder still to realize in the case of the half-ball stroke into a "blind" middle pocket shown in the next photograph (No. 6). To obtain the best effect of this stroke the page should be held level with the eyes, and adjusted in such a manner that the line of vision is directly over the centre of the cue-ball, a plan which is well worth following in all the pictures, for that matter. And in connection with this stroke it should be borne in mind that the white ball is some two feet away from the red. Even then the angle appears deceptive, much "wider," as they say in billiard-rooms, than it really is. This stroke should be set up and played with special care, as the angle of entry into the pocket is such that the least mistake throws the ball out. The player cannot see the fraction of an inch of pocket opening at the fall of the slate over which his ball must pass to effect a score; the pocket is therefore "blind," and the stroke cannot be handled with too much nicety. But, all the same, it is a plain-ball effort, although I dare say that if twenty ordinary cuemen saw me make it during a break they would feel positive that I had employed both screw and left-hand side. But I should have done nothing of the sort. My eye would have seen through the misleading appearance of the stroke at a glance; I should have made a plain hazard with every confidence regarding the score, my best energies being devoted to the strength demanded in directing the red towards the centre of the table to leave a losing hazard to follow from hand.



NO. 5. A HALF-BALL LOSER INTO A CORNER POCKET.

Leaving half-ball contacts, but adhering rigidly to central cue contacts, I propose to demonstrate by a short series of special strokes some idea of the infinite scope and capabilities of this simple, yet exquisitely beautiful, phase of billiards (Nos. 7 and 8). The first of these strokes is a run-through cannon. It is made by striking the cue-ball in the centre and making a nearly full contact with the white, which lies tight against the cushion. Of course, the stroke can be made by slightly varying the ball contact and utilizing side, or both top and side together. I know that, but I also know that it is far easier to think about and control one thing instead of two o



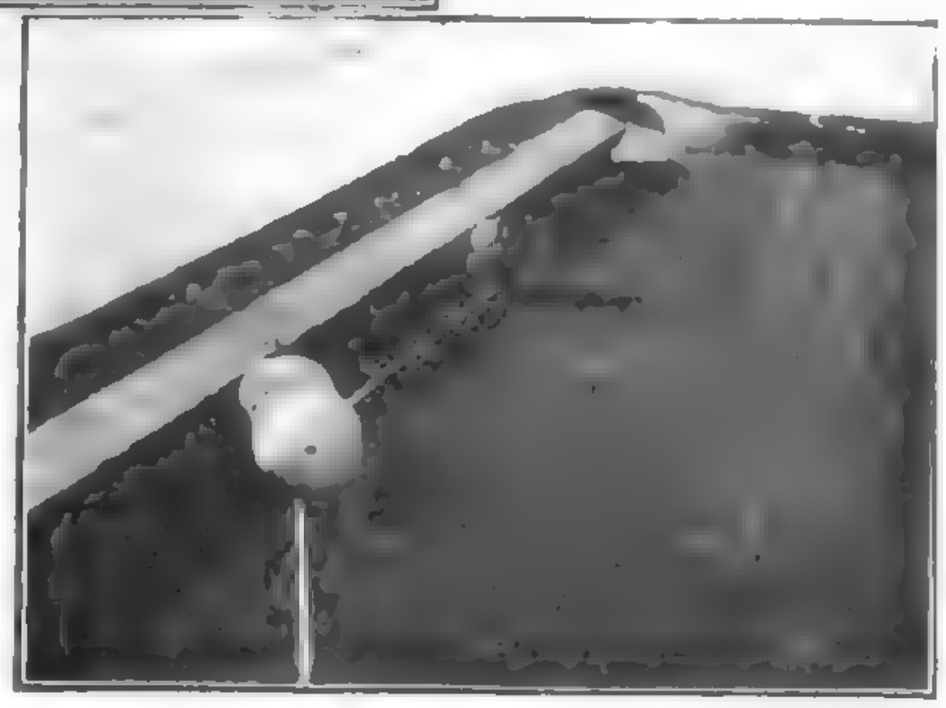
NO. 6. A "BLIND" POCKET.

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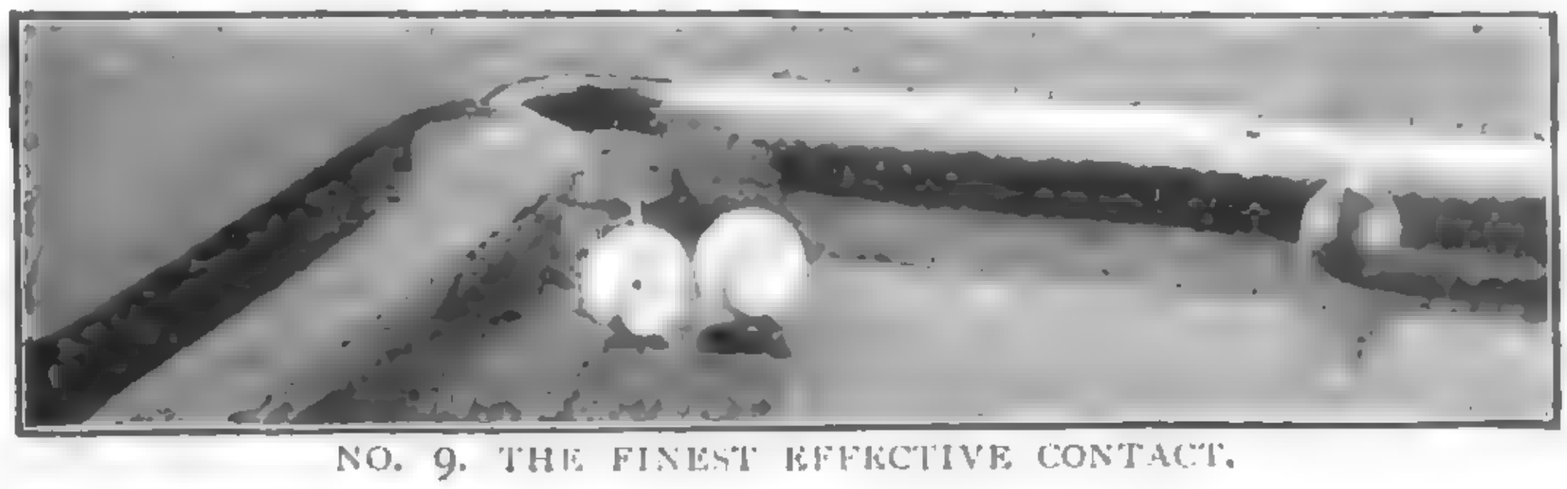
NO. 7. A RUN-THROUGH CANNON PLAYED WITHOUT SIDE.

three; so, therefore, why complicate matters needlessly, especially as, in addition to making the score, there is the essential after-position to manipulate? This stroke, played as described, affords a splendid test of cuemanship. The cue must be swung well and truly to make this stroke.



NO. 8. THE BALL-TO-BALL CONTACT FOR THE CANNON.

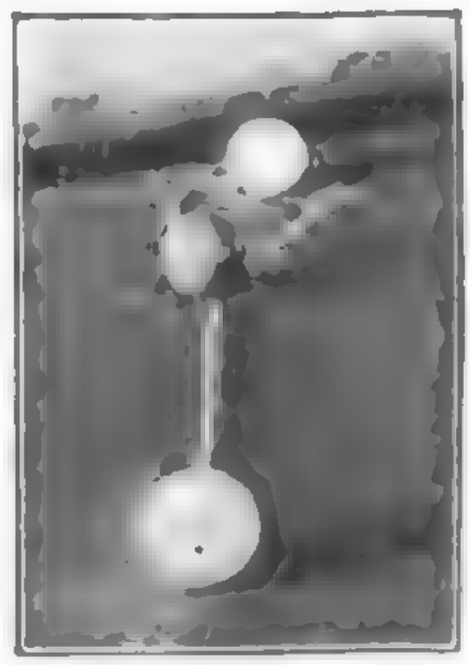
We now pass to a plain-ball stroke which offers the greatest possible contrast to the follow-through shot just dealt with. The photograph (No. 9), I should like to explain, shows the finest effective contact it is possible to make intentionally with a billiard-ball, and when a stroke of the type has to be played at a range of a foot or so, for intricate positional purposes, at the head of the table, it is about as difficult a stroke as the game offers outside purely exhibition efforts. In the stroke before us, however, the cue-ball is quite close to the object, and the picture shows the way to make the stroke so well that detailed explanation is needless. But there is one point connected with this stroke which may well be enlarged upon—namely, the necessity for getting directly behind the cue-ball when making the stroke. Many beginners would want to play the shot with the body almost in line with the cushion. This is wrong. The thing to do is to bring the body into such a pose that the spot on the cue-ball is fairly between the eyes of the player at the moment of cue contact.



NO. 9. THE FINEST EFFECTIVE CONTACT.

Another plain-ball stroke is the pretty kiss cannon depicted in our concluding photograph (No. 10). This is a tricky little stroke which is sure to work out all wrong if the direct follow is attempted, although it is apparently "on." Try it and see, and the balls will kiss and spoil the score every time. Yet the very cause of the trouble provides the remedy if the kiss is handled as it should be. Make a contact about three-quarters thick on the red ball and strike the cue-ball in the middle, thus causing it to run through the red over the line shown to the right of the illustration. The object-ball will then run on to the side cushion, rebound, and strike the second object white full from behind, and drive it on to the oncoming cue-ball, thus making the cannon at the termination of the line to the right of the red. The stroke sounds rather complicated, but is absurdly easy. It must be played slowly, and should leave the balls well placed for a simple close cannon to follow.

Now comes the moral of all these strokes, which is that every one of them has been accomplished by simply striking the cue-ball in its centre. Yet I know full well that if I made them in the ordinary run of my billiards before an audience of amateurs, the vast majority of those who saw the strokes played would wonder what "side" I used to produce such a wide variety of scoring effects. They would need more than a little convincing that the cue-ball had never been struck away from its centre; yet such is indeed the fact, and a proper appreciation of what it means will go farther towards making a billiard-player than any other information I can give to my readers.



NO. 10. A TRICKY LITTLE STROKE.

(*To be continued.*)

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LIFE-LIKE.

By MARTIN SWAYNE.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

COLONEL WEDGE was a quiet, genial bachelor. If there was anything that seemed to distinguish him from the familiar type of retired officer, it was his great breadth of shoulder. He was well over fifty, but still vigorous and active. On the day after his arrival in Paris, whither he had come on a week's visit, he breakfasted at nine and spent the morning in visiting some public places of interest. He lunched at a restaurant near the Porte St. Martin, where he found himself in a typically Parisian atmosphere, and after smoking a cigar began to stroll idly along the streets. Chance directed his steps in a northerly direction, and about three in the afternoon he found himself in the Montmartre district.

He walked along in a casual manner, his hands clasped behind his back, watching everything with infinite relish. While passing up a side street his eye fell on a flamboyant advertisement outside a cinematograph show. The Colonel was not averse to cinematograph shows, and it struck him that here, perhaps, he might see something out of the ordinary. The poster was certainly lurid. It represented a man being attacked by snakes, and Wedge understood enough French to read the statement underneath that the representation was absolutely life-like, and that the death-agony was a masterpiece of acting.

"Rattlesnakes," reflected the Colonel, eyeing the poster. "It's wonderful what they do in the way of films nowadays. Of course, they've taken out the poison glands."

He stood for a short time studying the poster, which was extremely realistic, and then decided to enter. He went up to the ticket-office, which stood on the pavement, and paid the entrance fee. It was obvious that the establishment was not of the first order. A couple of rickety wine-shops flanked it one on either side, and the ticket-office was apparently an old sentry-box with a hole cut in the back.

Wedge took his ticket and glanced up the street. It was a day of brilliant sunshine. At the far end of the narrow road there was a glimpse of the white domes of the Sacré Cœur, standing on its rising ground and looking

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like an Oriental palace. Only a few people were about, and the wine-shops were empty.

A shaft of sunlight fell on the poster of the man fighting with rattlesnakes, and the Colonel looked at it again. It attracted him in some mysterious way, probably because physical problems interested him.

"Seems to be in a kind of pit," he thought. "Otherwise he could run for it. It is certainly life-like."

He turned away, ticket in hand. A man standing before a faded plush curtain beckoned to him, and Wedge passed from the bright light of day into the darkness behind the curtain.

He could see nothing. Someone took his arm and led him forward. The Colonel blinked, but the darkness was complete. Somewhere on his left he could hear the familiar clicking of a cinematograph.

The hand on his arm piloted him gently along, and he had the impression of walking in a curve. But it seemed an intolerably long curve. Since he could not speak French, he was unable to ask how much farther he had to go. He felt vaguely that people were round him, close to him, and naturally concluded he was passing down the room where the performance was being held.

But where was the screen?

He could not see a ray of light. Heavy, impenetrable darkness was before him, and seemed to press on his eyelids like a cloth. Suddenly the hand on his arm was lifted. Wedge stopped, blinking.

"Look here," he said, with a feeling of irritation, "where am I?"

There was no answer. He waited, listening. He could hear nothing. The clicking of the cinematograph was no longer audible.

Deeply perplexed, he held out his arms before him and took a step forward. His outstretched foot descended on—nothing.

Wedge fell forward and downwards with a sharp cry. His fall was brief, but it seemed endless to him. He landed, sprawling, on something soft. Before he could move he was caught and held down with his face pressed against the soft mass that felt like a heap of pillows. A suffocating, pungent odour assailed his nostrils, and gradually consciousness slipped away.

When Colonel Wedge came to his senses he found himself in a small room lit by an oil-lamp hung against the wall. He was lying on a heap of mattresses, bound hand and foot. At first he stared vaguely upwards. Directly overhead was a circular mark in the ceiling. The sound of voices struck on his ears, and, looking round, he saw a group of men talking at a table near by.

With startling suddenness memory came back. He glanced up at the ceiling. There was no doubt that the circular mark was the outline of the trap-door through which he had fallen. He did not attempt to struggle, but lay passively searching in his mind for some explanation of his position.

The men at the table were talking in loud voices, but they spoke in French. He could not understand what they said.

He looked round at them. Five of them—there were half-a-dozen—were roughly dressed, with blue or red handkerchiefs knotted round their throats; but one of them was of a different type, and looked like a prosperous business man. He was the spokesman and leader of the group, and Wedge noticed that he had a peculiarly evil, energetic type of face. He spoke rapidly, occasionally nodding towards the heap of mattresses and employing violent gestures. From time to time he thumped the table before him. Finally he rose and crossed the room.

"My name is Dance," he said. He stuck the cigar he was smoking into the corner of his mouth and went on speaking between his teeth. "I'm an Englishman by birth, and wonderfully fond of my fellow-countrymen. That's why you are here. You're just the man I was wanting, and when I saw you looking at that poster I could have hugged myself. What did you think of it? Good, eh? Sorry you didn't see the film."

He chuckled to himself.

Wedge looked at him steadily and made no reply. The other shrugged his shoulders and turned away. Some further discussion followed, and then all six left the room.

Wedge waited until the sound of their footsteps had died away in the passage without, and then raised himself. Owing to the way in which he was bound he could not stand up. He looked around keenly. There was only one door and no window. The walls were of rough brick, and it was clear the place was a kind of cellar. Save for the table and chairs there was no furniture. The stone floor was damp, and from one dark corner Wedge could hear the trickling of water. After the first scrutiny of his prison he lay back again on the mattresses and tried to think. He could hear no sound of the traffic or footsteps from the road, and guessed that it would be useless to shout. Save for the trickle of water and the occasional hissing and spurting of the lamp, the place was absolutely silent.

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The atmosphere was thick and close. The flame of the lamp grew smaller and smaller, and finally expired. Wedge lay in the darkness, open-eyed, listening to the beating of his heart. He was thirsty. His throat was dry and his head ached, and the cords round his wrists and feet bit into the flesh. He made several powerful attempts to burst them, but in vain.

For what purpose did they want him? If it was simply a question of robbery, why was he kept prisoner? An eternity seemed to pass. In despair, he tried to sleep. But the question as to why he was in this prison repeated itself and made sleep impossible.

Wedge was a man of tried courage, but there was something sinister in his position that caused disagreeable thrills to pass down his back. The trap-door, the chloroform, the cords, the group of evil-looking men were not reassuring incidents. Moreover, the isolation in complete darkness with the monotonous trickling of water unnerved him.

An hour went by, and he made another violent attempt to release himself. His breath came in gasps. Before his shut eyes he saw sheets of red flame. But his efforts were useless. Thoroughly exhausted, he lay still again, staring upwards.

Owing to some trick of vision, possibly because the strong sunlight had intensified the colouring of the poster while he was studying it, he saw a shadowy picture of the man fighting for his life in the pit full of rattlesnakes hovering before him in the darkness. He thought grimly that it would be some time before he would have the pleasure of seeing the representation of that film—perhaps never. The latter event was more likely. It was not probable that they would let him go free, because his freedom would mean their arrest.

"They want me for some purpose," he muttered. "But what it is, Heaven knows. It can't be simple robbery. There's no point in murdering me. I'm not a person of any importance, so I don't see where the object of kidnapping comes in. Their game beats me, unless they've mistaken me for someone else."

A step outside interrupted his reflections. He heard the door open. Something that sounded like a plate was put on the floor, and the steps retreated down the passage. After a few minutes they became audible again, and a light showed in the doorway. A man appeared holding a candle. Colonel Wedge realized that it was the intention of his captors that he should take some nourishment, and decided that to do so would be the wisest course. There was no reason why he should weaken himself by abstinence.

He submitted to being fed by his jailer, and eagerly drank the harsh red wine that was offered to him. When the meal was finished he was left alone again, but the candle was put on the table. By watching its rate of decrease in length Wedge gained some idea of the passage of time. By a calculation based on the number of his heart beats, which were normally sixty to the minute, he deduced that the candle would last for about four hours. As a matter of fact, Wedge's deduction was wrong. The candle burned for three hours. Wedge was unaware that his heart was beating eighty to the minute.

Months seemed to elapse before the candle shot up in a last flare. The Colonel stared at the walls, at the rough, unfaced bricks, at the trap-door in the ceiling. He closed his eyes and tried to sleep. He sat up at intervals and looked round him. He rolled from one side to another. But nothing helped to make the time pass more quickly, and when he was left again in darkness he felt for the first time in his life how easy it would be to go mad.

The tramp of feet roused him from a drowsy, half-conscious condition. The door was flung open and a lantern shone in Wedge's eyes. The men who had sat at the table had returned. Two of them cut the cords round his ankles and pulled him on to his feet. He stood with difficulty, for his legs were numb.

The man Dance, who had previously spoken to him, whose evil face had made an impression on the Colonel's mind, sat down at the table, and Wedge was placed before him.

"Speak no French?" he inquired.

"No."

The man nodded, and played with a thick gold ring on one of his fingers. His eyes were fixed on the Colonel's face.

"What am I here for?" asked Wedge, quietly.

"You'll see soon."

"Do you want my money?"

"We've taken that already."

They looked at each other steadily. The others in the cellar shuffled uneasily. They did not seem to be so certain of themselves as the man at the table.

"You're an English officer, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"And you've seen some fighting?"

The Colonel shrugged his shoulders and

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said nothing. He refused to submit to a cross-examination at the hands of this scoundrel.

"All right," said the other. "Don't get angry. I promise you that you'll see some more fighting before you die."

Something in the man's expression made Wedge take a quick step towards the table.

"What do you mean? Are you going to kill me?"

There was no answer, but the silence was enough. Wedge relaxed his attitude slowly.

"Is it money you need?" he asked, after a pause.

"What's the good of offering us money? Once you got out of this place you would give us away to the police. Yes, we need money, but not from you."

One thought dominated Wedge's mind. It was clear that the situation did not demand any unnecessary heroism. If anything could effect his escape he was perfectly justified in making use of it.

"I will give you a thousand pounds, and will promise not to put the affair in the hands of the police," he said.

"He offers money, and gives his word of honour to say nothing to the police!" exclaimed the other, looking at the men behind Wedge.

There was an outburst of violent opposition. They were wildly excited. They were all round Wedge, shouting and gesticulating and brandishing their fists in his face. He stood impassively in the centre of them with his hands bound. What was this riot? Why did the eyes of these men shine so strangely?

"Two thousand," he said, steadily.

"Impossible!" The man at the table jumped up. "This is only a waste of time."

He caught up the lantern and went out. The others, pushing Wedge before them, followed. They passed through a long stone corridor, down some narrow steps, and stopped before an iron door. Wedge heard the fumbling of keys, the creak of a rusty



"THEY WERE ALL ROUND WEDGE, SHOUTING AND GESTICULATING AND BRANDISHING THEIR FISTS IN HIS FACE."

lock, and the door swung open. The interior was dark.

Dance stood by the door, holding the lantern aloft. In obeyance to a brief command Wedge's hands were released.

"Hand him the club."

A stout cudgel of twisted wood, with a heavy nobbed end, was thrust into his hands. But Wedge was a man of action, and he saw in a flash that if he was to escape from his unknown fate the opportunity had come. They were trying to push him through the door into the dark interior.

"*Vite! Il est dangereux!*" exclaimed the man with the lantern.

But Wedge was too quick. He swung the

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club swiftly round, and the lantern fell, smashed to atoms. In a moment he was seized by half-a-dozen hands. He fought powerfully, but they hung on to him grimly, and little by little he was thrust forward. He had not enough space to use the club. He dropped it and used his fists, and more than once struck the stone walls in the confusion of the struggle in the dark. Then someone got hold of his throat, while the others fastened on his arms, and he was thrown backwards. He heard the clang of the iron door and lay gasping on the floor.

A blinding white light suddenly shone down on him. He staggered to his feet and looked round, shading his eyes with his hands from the dazzling glare. He was in a circular space bounded by smooth white walls. The floor was sanded. Above him burned half-a-dozen arc-lamps, whose brilliant rays were reflected directly downwards by polished metal discs. The upper part of the place was in shadow, but he could make out an iron balcony running partly round the wall, about fifteen feet above the sanded floor.

Colonel Wedge went to the wall and began to examine its surface. It was smooth, and seemed made of painted iron. The outline of the door through which he had been flung was visible on one side, but directly opposite there was the outline of another door. He went towards it. It was also made of iron like the surrounding structure, and apparently opened outwards. He pushed at it, but it was shut.

A sound of something falling on the floor made him turn. The wooden cudgel had been thrown down from the iron platform above. Looking up, he could dimly see a number of faces staring down at him, and also a couple of box-like instruments, one at either end of the platform. It was difficult to see clearly, for the light of the arc-lamps was intense. He stared up, shielding his eyes, and then suddenly he saw what they were. A couple of cinematograph machines were trained on the floor below!

It was not until then that Wedge fully realized his position. The picture of the man fighting the rattlesnakes was suddenly explained. He remembered the pit. He walked to the centre and stood with clenched fists. Here was the pit. *Extremely life-like!*

He stooped and picked up the cudgel. At any rate, whatever he had to face, he would make a fight for it.

Mechanically he found himself watching the second door. It was through that door that the menace of death would come.

Up on the platform they were whispering together.

His brain was clear, and he felt calm. He knew that whatever came out from behind that door would have the intention to kill. And he knew, also, that it was not the wish of the onlookers that he should triumph. It would not be a fair fight. In the moments of suspense he wondered in a kind of deliberate, leisurely way what was coming. They would not repeat the rattlesnake picture. That had already had its victim. In this arena one man had acted the part of fear with marvellous realism—perhaps others as well.

Cudgel in hand, ready and braced, with his free hand at his moustache, Colonel Wedge waited, his eyes fixed on the door.

"Ah, I think you understand now," said a voice out of the shadows above. "We hope that this will make a fine film, the finest of this series that we have done yet."

Wedge did not move a muscle.

"We rely on you to do your best for us."

Somewhere at the bottom of his heart the Colonel registered a vow that if he ever got out of that place alive he would kill Dance.

A chuckle followed and then silence, except for the sizzling of the arc-lamps.

Then he heard a sound of clicking. The cinematograph machines had begun.

"Ready?"

Wedge took his breath slowly. The door was opening.

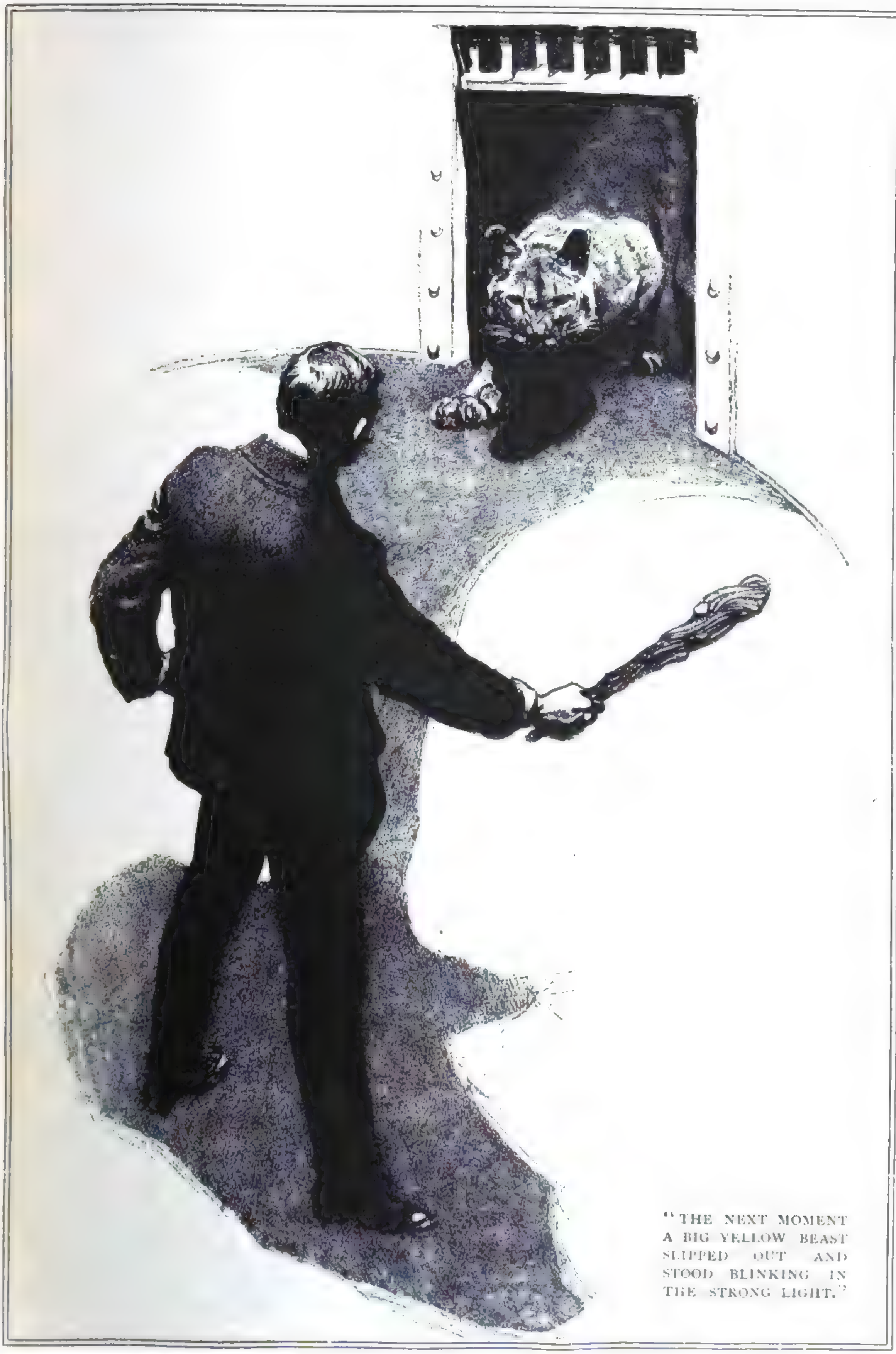
He saw a gap of blackness widening in the white circular wall. The hand that was at his moustache fell to his side. The cudgel rose a trifle, and the muscles of his right arm stiffened. Inch by inch, without a creak, the door swung outwards until it stood widely open.

For a few seconds nothing appeared. The suspense was becoming unendurable, and Wedge had just made up his mind to approach when he saw an indistinct form moving in the background of the shadowy interior, and next moment a big yellow beast slipped out and stood blinking in the strong light. He recognized the flat diamond head and tufted ears in a moment. The door clanged behind it.

"Puma," he muttered, with his eyes on the brute, and a spark of hope glowed in his heart. There were worse brutes to face single-handed than pumas, and he knew something of the capriciousness of the animal. It was just possible——

His thoughts ceased abruptly. The beast was moving. It slunk on its belly to the

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"THE NEXT MOMENT A BIG YELLOW BEAST SLIPPED OUT AND STOOD BLINKING IN THE STRONG LIGHT."

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wall, and began to walk slowly round and round. Wedge, turning as it moved, always faced it. It quickened its pace into a trot, and as it ran it looked only occasionally at the man in the centre. It seemed more interested in the wall. At times it stretched its head and peered upwards.

In its lean white jaw and yellow eyes there was no message of hatred for the moment. Suddenly it stopped and listened. The clicking of the cinematograph had attracted it. It stood up against the wall, clawing at the paint. Then it squatted on its haunches, with its back to Wedge, and blinked up at the platform overhead.

The heavy fetid odour of the beast filled the air. Wedge relaxed himself a little, but the puma heard the movement, for it looked round swiftly. It behaved as if it had seen him for the first time, and began to pace round and round again, eyeing him. It came to a halt near the door from which it had emerged, and lay down flat, with its paws outstretched, watching Wedge. He caught the sheen of its eyes. He remained still, for at the slightest movement the brute quivered.

As yet he could read nothing vindictive in its look, but he knew that at any moment it might change into a raging, snarling demon and spring. Being a believer in the idea that animals are in some way conscious of the emotional state in others and act accordingly, he tried to banish all sense of fear and all sense of ill-will from his mind, and look at it calmly and indifferently.

The puma, with its fore-paws extended on the sand and its head raised, blinked lazily at him. It seemed half asleep by its attitude. Sometimes the brilliant eyes were almost shut.

"Mordieu!" said a voice above. "He wants rousing."

In a flash the animal was on its feet, rigid and glaring up. Apparently the platform overhead roused its anger. Its tail began to whip from side to side, and its lip lifted at one corner in a vicious snarl, uncovering the white fang.

A clamour of voices broke out. The whole aspect of the beast changed. Its eyes blazed. It stooped on its belly, glaring upwards. Was it possible it recognized an old enemy amongst the spectators?

Wedge waited anxiously, and the sweat began to break out on his brow.

With bared claws, the animal crouched, still looking upwards. It seemed to have forgotten Wedge. The men were shouting at it and stamping with their feet on the iron floor of the platform. The beast put one paw out and crept forward. The muscles rippled and bulged under the skin.

"It's going to spring," thought Wedge. "But it's not looking at me."

Slowly step by step the beast advanced. It passed scarcely two feet away from Wedge, and went on without looking at him. When it was almost directly under the platform it stopped and snarled upwards.

Then someone threw a lighted match on its back, and straightway it became transformed into the devil-cat of tradition.

Wedge was never quite clear as to its movements after that, for it flashed round the arena like a streak of yellow lightning. He raised his club, but the brute was not after him. It went twice, and then a third time, round the white walls, and stopped for an instant, taut and low on the sandy floor. And then it shot up in a magnificent leap towards the shadows above the arc-lamps.

The shouts from the platform ceased suddenly, and then a wild hubbub broke out.

Wedge heard the rattling and scraping of the beast's claws against the railings above and a shriek of terror. There was a stampede of feet. A loud series of snarls followed and the sound of a body falling heavily.

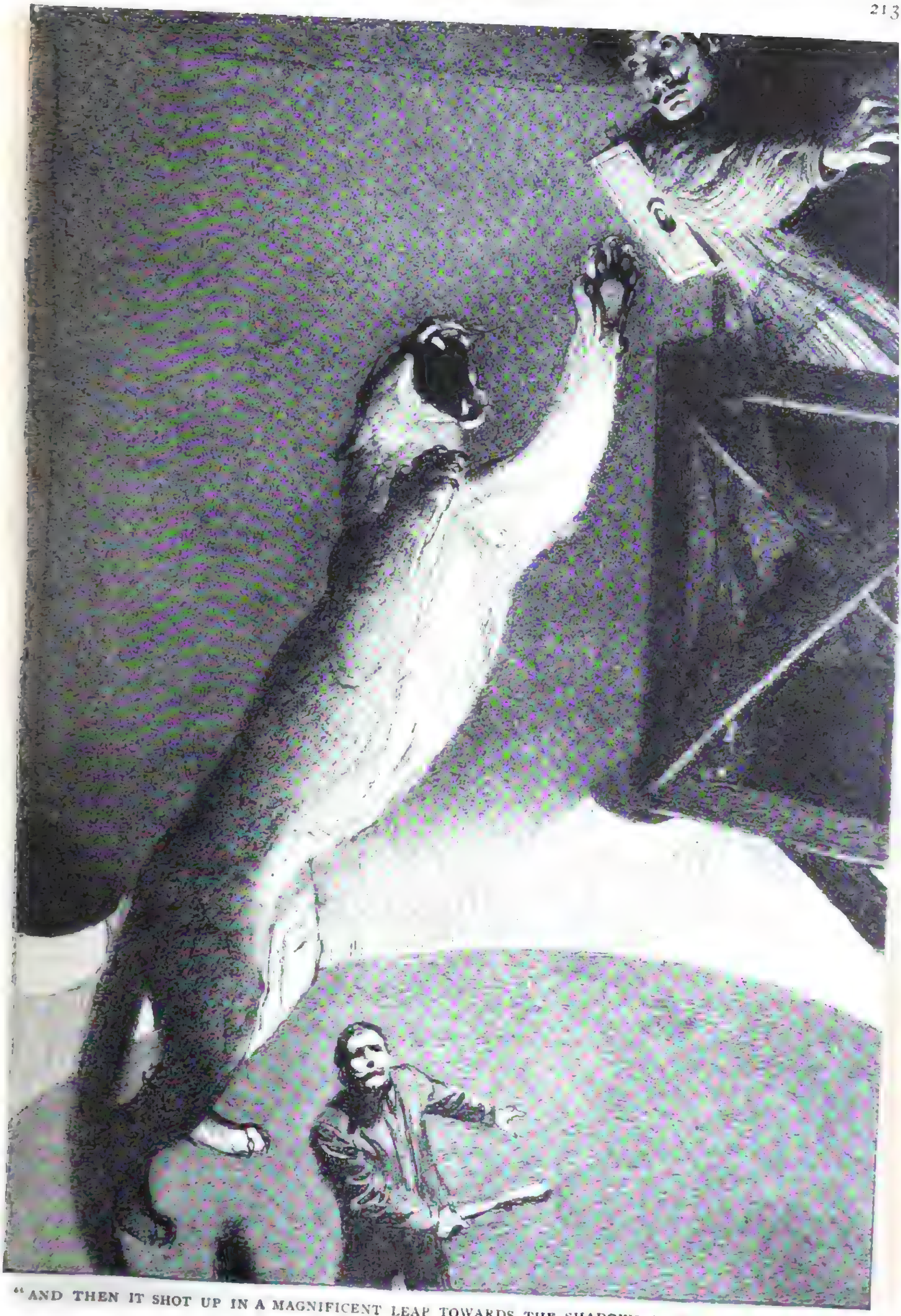
Wedge stood for a moment dazed. Then he dashed across to the door through which the beast had entered, and flung all his weight against it. He tried again and again with all the weight of his powerful shoulders. It yielded with a crash, and he fell flat into the cage on the other side, amongst the foul straw.

He was up in an instant. By the light of the arc-lamps in the arena he could make out that the cage had an iron grating on one side closed by a bolt. He thrust his hand through the bars and worked back the bolt. Next moment he was out of the cage and running down a dark stone corridor, cudgel in hand, and determined to brain anyone who stood in his path. At the top of a flight of steps he came to a door barred from the inside. He flung aside the fastenings and staggered out into the sweet night air.

When the police raided the cellars under the cinematograph show a few hours later, led by Wedge, they found the puma asleep in its open cage, and above, on the iron platform, all that was left of Mr. Dance, inventor and producer of life-like films.

It was not until daylight came that Wedge discovered they had blackened his eyebrows and drawn disfiguring lines across his face.

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"AND THEN IT SHOT UP IN A MAGNIFICENT LEAP TOWARDS THE SHADOWS ABOVE THE ARC-LAMPS."

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Humours of Parliamentary Life.

Wit, Repartee, and Story in the House of Commons

By JOSEPH HEIGHTON.

Illustrated by H. M. Bateman.

IT takes very little to tickle the risibilities of our M.P.'s during a debate. A nervous member sitting on his hat, a partly-forgotten speech, a blunder in Parliamentary deportment, or an innovation in the way of dress is sufficient to set members gurgling with merriment. The House was never more amused, for instance, than when Mr. Winston Churchill had the temerity to stroll down to the floor of the House, during an all-night sitting, wearing a pair of slippers, a flannel suit, and a graceful collar that overflowed his neck.

"Pyjamas!" shouted someone. "Take them off, Churchill!" yelled another; while even Mr. Lloyd George turned a reproving countenance on the First Lord of the Admiralty, as the latter made preparations to fly, and exclaimed, "Oh, and pink of all colours!"

The House, too, is never slow to seize upon an unintentional personal touch in a speech, a fact which Mr. Reginald McKenna may vouch for. Two weeks after his marriage to that charming and most successful of political hostesses, Miss Pamela Jekyll, in 1908, he was "on the floor," arguing in favour of the Government's Old-Age Pension scheme.

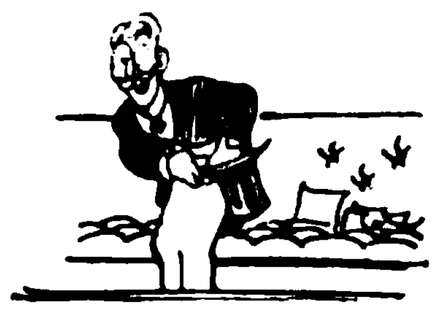
"It is relatively cheaper for two persons living together than one," he declared.

"You ought to know, anyway," cried the quick-witted Will Crooks from the Labour benches.

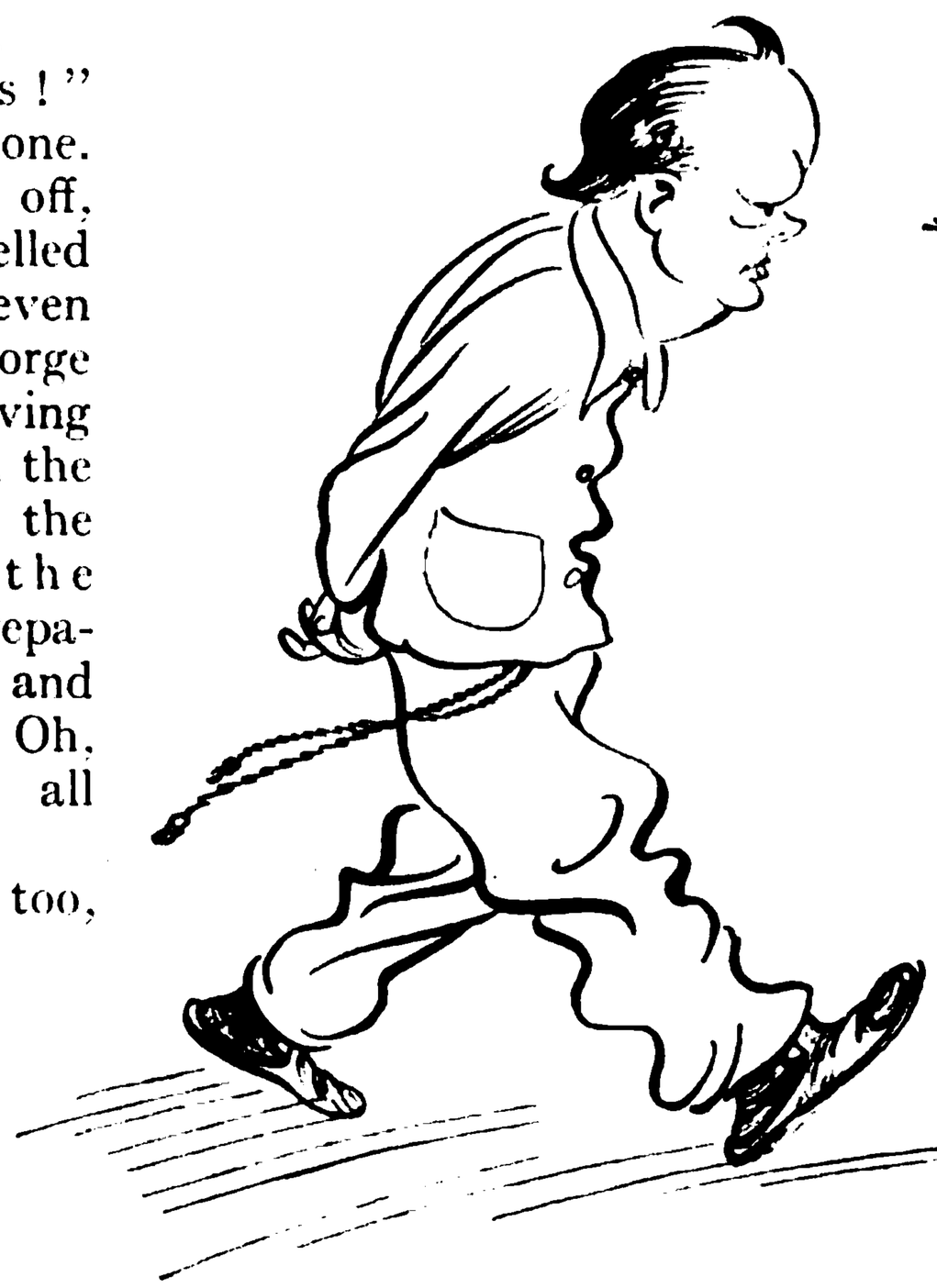
A blush and a smile illuminated Mr. McKenna's countenance.

"Well, I hope it will be cheaper," he remarked quietly, and members broke into renewed guffaws, as they thought, perhaps, of their own sad disillusionment.

And there was a smile on the face of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and loud laughter from both sides of the House, when Mr. Llewelyn Williams, the worthy member for Carmarthen, sought to excuse, a short time ago, in answer to a question by the Marquess of Tullibardine, the introduction on the much-abused insurance stamp of the daffodil in the place of the leek, as emblematic of the Principality of Wales.



Adroit in the use of the Welsh tongue, Mr. Llewelyn Williams suggested that "Cenin Pedr," or "Peter's leek," was the Welsh for daffodil, and "thought it was only through a mistranslation of the word by Shakespeare — or Bacon — or some other ignorant Saxon, that a stinking vegetable had become the national emblem in place of a charming bloom.



"'PYJAMAS!' SHOUTED SOMEONE."

Apropos of the language of the Principality, there is nothing which delights "Mabon," the ever-popular member for Rhondda Valley, more than to air his Welsh in the House. He does not get many opportunities, but when he does he invariably floors his opponent, as Lord Alverstone, who on one memorable occasion was his victim, will readily admit. Some years ago there was a debate, in the course of which "Mabon" made a

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speech in Welsh, or rather introduced some Welsh sentences by way of illustration. The occasion was the appointment of a judge for a Welsh county court who could not speak the native language. The Attorney-General, as Lord Alverstone then was, defended the appointment, arguing that the judge's ignorance of Welsh was not a practical inconvenience. It was an unlucky remark, for it brought up "Mabon," and Lord Alverstone would probably confess now that he was completely beaten.

"So the Welsh language does not matter?" said "Mabon." "Very well. Let us suppose we are in the county court at Ynys-y-Maengwyn, and the Attorney-General is the judge. I am the plaintiff, seeking payment for a pair of boots. The Attorney-General asks me if I am prepared to swear if the boots delivered to the defendant were rights and lefts, or otherwise, as the defendant declares. That being a delicate question, which I could hardly trust myself to answer in English, suppose I said: 'Cymmer, dau bwech, ar gwastad clawdd lluest twich; pen-dre pistull bwich dwy hafodtai lech wedd, Yspvtty?' Now," shouted "Mabon," "what would the hon. and learned gentleman have replied to that?"

At the time of the perpetration of the joke, no little speculation was rife as to the identity of the disciple of the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson, bard of the House, who wrote the following lines, apropos of the dinner to thousand-pound subscribers to the party funds, given a short time ago by the Duke of Westminster. A few days after the banquet a number of questions were asked in the House of Commons concerning the importation of Colonial wines and Colonial chilled meat. When answered, Mr. King, M.P. for North Somerset, rose and asked, "Were those wines and this chilled meat provided at the recent banquet in support of Imperial Preference at Grosvenor House?" And it was in reference to this question that an M.P. addressed to Mr. King the following lines:—

The feast was dull, the dishes cold,
Each diner knew he had been sold;
Meat that in ice had crossed the line,
Washed down by flat Australian wine,
Is not a bill of fare that sounds
Like value for a thousand pounds.
I fear our Tories will succumb
To such Imperial martyrdom,
Which, while involving vast expense
To boom Colonial preference,
Is, frankly speaking, rather like
A milder kind of hunger strike.

Later, the secret was betrayed to the writer of this article that the humorous bard was Mr. D. T. Holmes, M.P. for Govan.

As an example of caustic Parliamentary humour, the supplementary question put by the irrepressible Tim Healy to Mr. Brodrick (now Viscount Midleton), when the latter was acting as War Secretary during the South African War, would be hard to beat.

The Boers were winning battle after battle, and there was much criticism regarding the capabilities of officers and leaders. Ultimately some member put the question to Mr. Brodrick as to how many horses he had dispatched to South Africa. He gave an answer, whereupon Mr. Tim Healy got up and put a supplementary question, "Would the right hon. gentleman kindly inform the House how many asses he has sent to South Africa?"

Mention of asses reminds one of the Irish M.P. who once interrupted the oratory of an enemy of his country by ejaculating "Ass!" "The honourable member," came the lightning retort, "flatters me too much in claiming me as kinsman." And then there was the occasion when a scion of a noble house, defending his order, asked, "Is it not right that, in order to hand down to posterity the virtues of those who have been eminent for their services to the country, their descendants should enjoy the honours conferred on them as a reward for such services?"

"By the same rule," chimed in the late Mr. Labouchere, "if a man is hanged for his misdeeds, all his posterity should be hanged too."

More often than not it is Irish wit that scores in the House of Commons, and many a time during an exciting debate both Conservatives and Liberals have been nonplussed by the ready repartee of M.P.'s from the Emerald Isle. There was one memorable occasion, however, and it is recalled by George W. Smalley in "Anglo-American Memories," when Irish members were for the moment stricken dumb by the retort of a member who could not afterwards be identified.

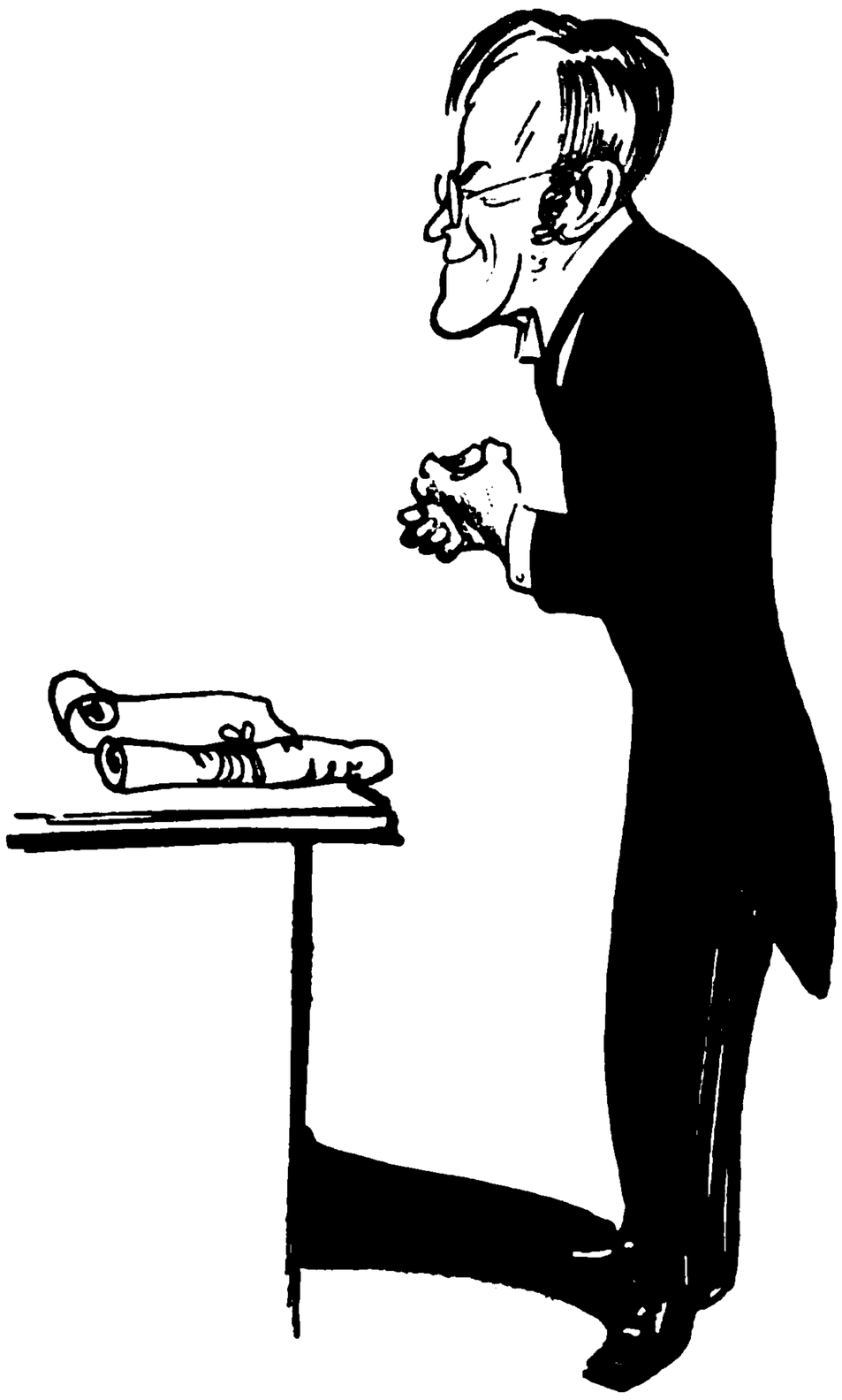
Mr. Chamberlain, while speaking on the Home Rule question, said something regarding the late Duke of Devonshire, whereupon a Nationalist member asked, "How long is it since the Duke of Devonshire has been in Ireland?" and from across the floor came the answer, like a flash of lightning, "Not since his brother was murdered in Phœnix Park."

Mr. Smalley considers this retort worthy to rank with Colonel Sanderson's answer to

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a demand for his reasons against Home Rule. "There are," answered the gallant colonel, promptly, "in this House sixty-nine good and sufficient reasons against Home Rule, and there they sit."

The House of Commons, however, is never so amused as when a member is betrayed, in his enthusiasm, into a mixed metaphor. Mr. Balfour, some time ago, spoke of "an empty theatre of unsympathetic auditors," while Lord Curzon remarked that "though not out of the wood, we have a good ship." Sir William Hart Dyke has told how Mr. Lowther "had caught a big fish in his net, and went to the top of the tree for it," while a financial Minister assured the Commons that "the steps of the Government should go hand in hand with the interests of the manufacturer." And it was in the Lords that the Government was warned that "the constitutional rights of the people were being trampled upon by the mailed hand of authority."



"'THE HOUSE OF LORDS,' HE SAID, 'REPRESENT NOBODY BUT THEMSELVES, AND THEY ENJOY THE FULL CONFIDENCE OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS.'"

According to the testimony of Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, who has sat as Nationalist member for South Down since 1902, and whose witticisms have frequently during the past ten years made the House ring with laughter, Mr. Winston Churchill is one of the greatest masters of repartee in the Commons. It is not so long ago, when the First Lord of the Admiralty was speaking, that someone interrupted with the cry of "Rot!"

At once came the retort, "I have no doubt the hon. gentleman is speaking what is in his mind."

It is to Mr. Winston Churchill, by the way, that we owe the wittiest summing-up of a Parliamentary candidate: "He is asked to stand, he wants to sit, and he is expected to lie." Mr. Churchill is also credited with the conundrum: "What is the difference between a candidate and an M.P.?" To which he supplied the answer, "One stands for a place and the other sits for it."

Mr. Lowther, the Speaker, has a pretty turn of wit at times. A Minister one day, replying to a question, said he had nothing to add to an answer he had already given on the subject. "Arising out of that answer," commenced a determined questioner, but he got no farther. The Speaker was on his feet immediately. "Nothing arises out of nothing," he said, in his quiet, suave manner. And the House roared.

The Speaker also had a quiet "dig" at Mr. Lloyd George a short time ago when he performed the opening ceremony at the Carlisle flower, fruit, and honey show. Mr. Lowther is an enthusiastic gardener, and during the course of his remarks said:—

"To-day we are all interested in flowers. Everyone must have his herbaceous border. No one is considered a gentleman who has not a pergola, and if we want to be qualified for a position in society we must have a rock garden." He did not want to dogmatize to them on the subject, but he thought it was due to the fact that they were all richer than they had been—so far as the Chancellor of the Exchequer would allow them—and they found that while all their other pleasures were heavily taxed, gardens, as such, were not at present taxed. He might say to them, "Gather ye roses while ye may," because they might have a severe tax placed on gardens as soon as it was discovered what a pleasure they gave to those who cultured them.

There are two members of the Cabinet whose speeches, usually full of wit, humour, and brilliant epigrams, are always a delight to both parties. Reference is made to Mr. Birrell and Lord Haldane. What, for instance, could be happier than the former's reply to the bishop who condoled with him on the defeat of his Education Bill? The President

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of the Board of Education, as Mr. Birrell then was, replied with a twinkle in his eye:—

"Yes, my lord, the Bill is dead, but I believe in the resurrection of the dead."

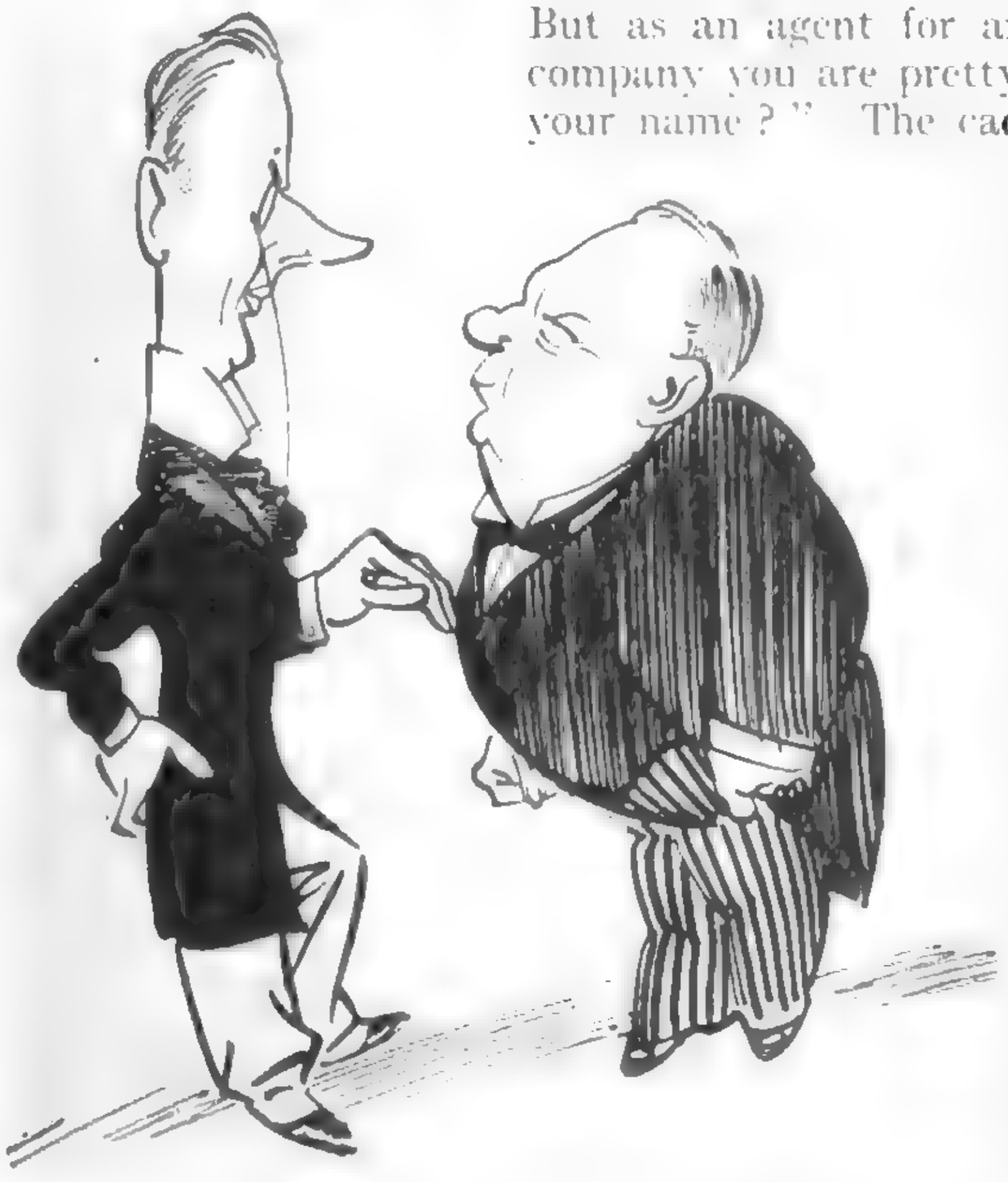
One of his best epigrams was that which he applied once to the Upper Chamber. "The House of Lords," he said, "represent nobody but themselves, and they enjoy the full confidence of their constituents"; while of the Press he has said, "I agree that the Press is a mirror of the age. It reflects what people were supposed to want, far more than what they really want."

Mr. Birrell's description of the House of Lords might be followed by Sir John Benn's allusion to the Commons, which he has described as being "like one of the ancient clocks in the Guildhall Museum—a splendid piece of old work, which excites the admiration of everyone, but useless for modern time-keeping. It wants a new mainspring and the latest improvements to make it go."

Here is a story which Lord Haldane tells against himself, but in praise of the astuteness of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. "I remember," he says, "in 1898 being very anxious to get a Bill through Parliament for the establishment of a teaching university in London—there was then only an examining university—and I went to Mr. Chamberlain, who was then very influential in the Government. Mr. Chamberlain said to me, 'Excellent; but, dear me, there is Birmingham,' and before I knew where I was he had got a charter through for Birmingham and a teaching university established in Birmingham."

It is, however, in the smoking and dining rooms of the House of Commons that one hears the most humorous stories, when, forgetting for a time that there are such worries as debates and divisions, members "swop" electioneering and sporting stories with zest and gusto.

There is a gem of a golfing story, for instance, told by Mr. Akers-Douglas concerning a certain player and an irritating caddie. The latter followed so closely, and was so anxious to please by intelligent anticipation, that the player had several narrow escapes of severely disfiguring him. After a tedious and unprofitable round he paid him off, gave him his lunch-ticket and threepence for cleaning his clubs, and addressed him: "You know, you are not quite perfect as a caddie. There is room for improvement. But as an agent for an accident insurance company you are pretty hot stuff. What is your name?" The caddie, a stolid-looking and hitherto silent youth, moved, like Balaam's ass, by the exigencies of the situation, opened his mouth and replied, "Mustard!"

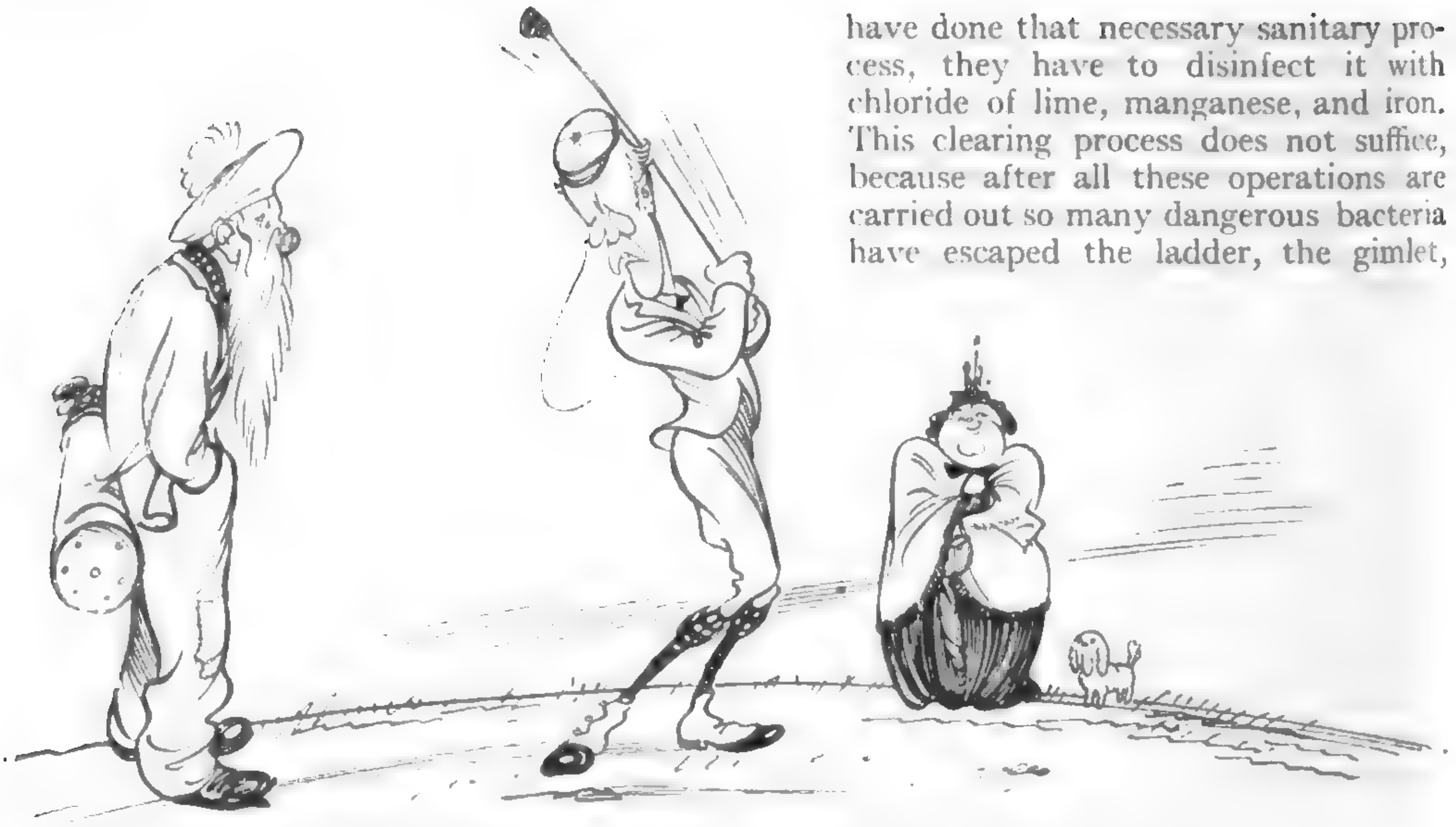


"EXCELLENT; BUT, DEAR ME, THERE IS BIRMINGHAM."

Mr. Balfour figures in a number of golfing stories of doubtful authenticity, but the following is vouched for. The first time he ever played at St. Andrews he was being closely watched by one pair of eyes. The critic was an old lady, who was a great political admirer of Mr. Asquith. She could see nothing wrong in him, and even forgave him his golfing faults. When Mr. Balfour turned up at the old course for the first time, she went down to watch him. He did not play so well as he does now, and he wound up a rather difficult round by topping his tee shot at the eighteenth, the ball failing even to reach the burn. That satisfied the old lady. "Aye, aye," she muttered, audibly, and with evident satisfaction, "Asquith at his worst was a deal better than that!"

Mention of Sir John Benn reminds one that he and John Burns some years ago paid a visit to America, the former describing himself as Sancho Panza to Mr. Burns's Don Quixote. Anent this visit, the President of the Local Government Board relates that he was one of a party who were seeing a celebrated town, and the guide, who was showing them the attractions, pointing to the river,

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"'AYE, AYE,' SHE MUTTERED, AUDIBLY, 'ASQUITH AT HIS WORST WAS A DEAL BETTER THAN THAT!'"

said: "Ladies and gentlemen, you see through the trees the broad and heaving bosom of the River Potomac. That is the source from which we get a very generous water supply. The poor use it for soup, the middle-class dye their clothes with it, and the very rich top-dress their lawns and gardens with it. Drive on, Sam."

Mr. Burns says he also had a description of a water supply from Canada. A town, enterprising in many ways, was exceedingly anxious to score off the rival town east of them, and, referring to itself, said: "Edmonton is a young but pushful city that prides itself on its water supply. We have no desire to depreciate our eastern rival, but in the matter of water supply we are far ahead of her. The wood and the flotsam and jetsam and timber are so bad in their reservoirs that they have to filter the water through a ladder. The citizens have to extract the water from the *débris* with a gimlet, and when they have done that necessary sanitary process, they have to disinfect it with chloride of lime, manganese, and iron. This clearing process does not suffice, because after all these operations are carried out so many dangerous bacteria have escaped the ladder, the gimlet, and chloride of lime that they have to be taken into the back yard and killed with a club!"



"A PASSING TRAIN TOOK THE TROUSERS OUT OF HIS HAND."

A story which is a great favourite at St. Stephen's concerns a painfully embarrassing situation in which Mr. Sydney Buxton once found himself. The incident was first related by his cousin, Mr. Sydney Holland, the chairman of the Poplar Hospital, and has been going the rounds since. It appears that Mr. Buxton one day got to a railway station five minutes before the train arrived, and sat down on a bank to wait.

When he got into a compartment he found his coat and waistcoat full of ants, so he took them off and shook them. Shortly afterwards he felt the ants inside his trousers, so he took them off, and was shaking them out of the window when a passing train took the trousers out of his hand.

This was very awkward. He was going to a Cabinet Council, and he had on a frock-coat but no trousers

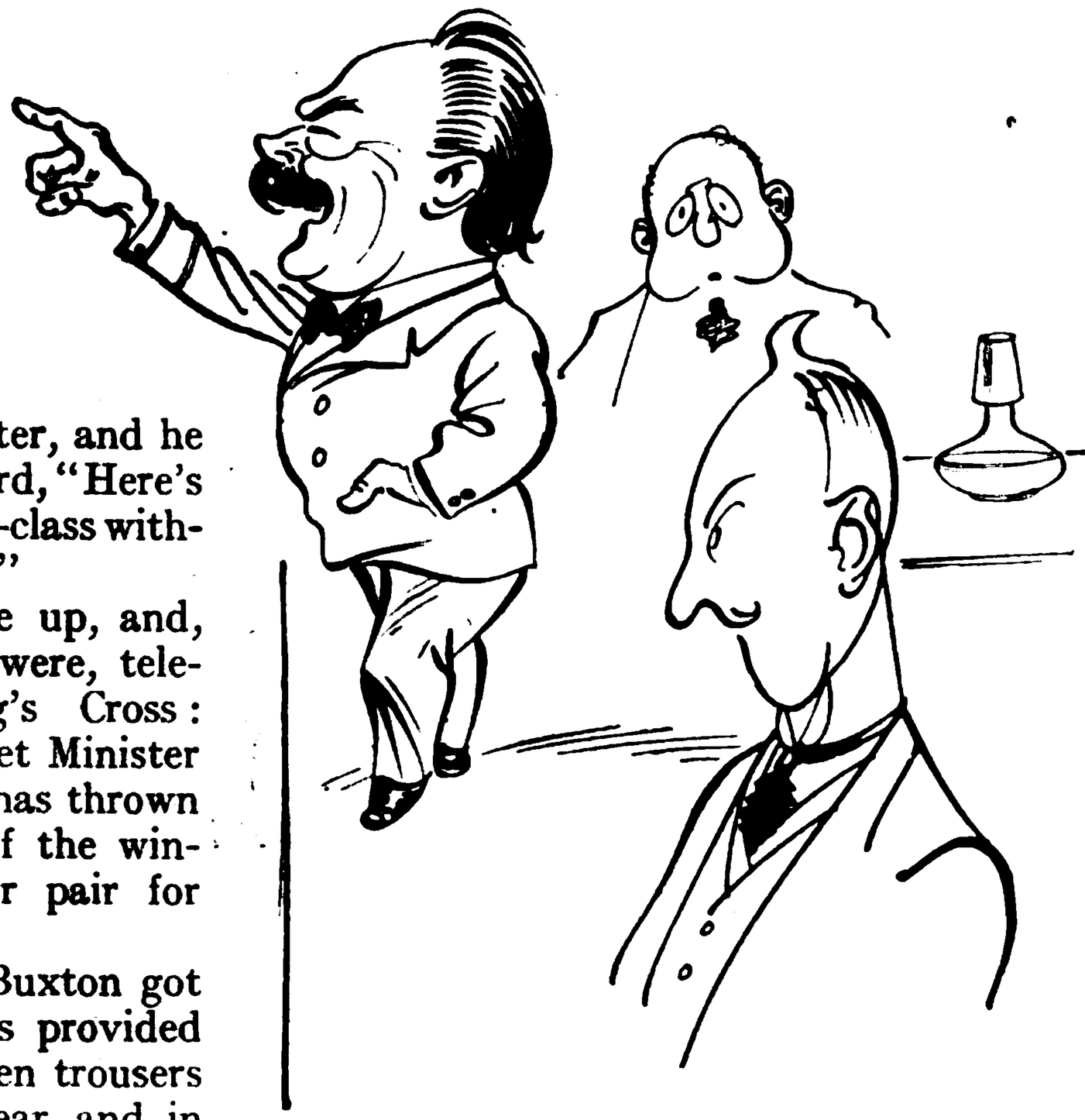
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At the next stopping-place he called to a porter, "I have had the misfortune to throw my trousers out of the window."

"That won't do," said the porter, and he shouted to the guard, "Here's a bloke in the first-class without any bags on!"

The guard came up, and, seeing how things were, telegraphed to King's Cross: "There is a Cabinet Minister in the train who has thrown his trousers out of the window. Get another pair for him."

When Sydney Buxton got to London he was provided with a pair of green trousers such as porters wear, and in them he went to the Cabinet meeting.



"'WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THOSE POLITICAL JEREMIAHS,' HE CRIED OUT."

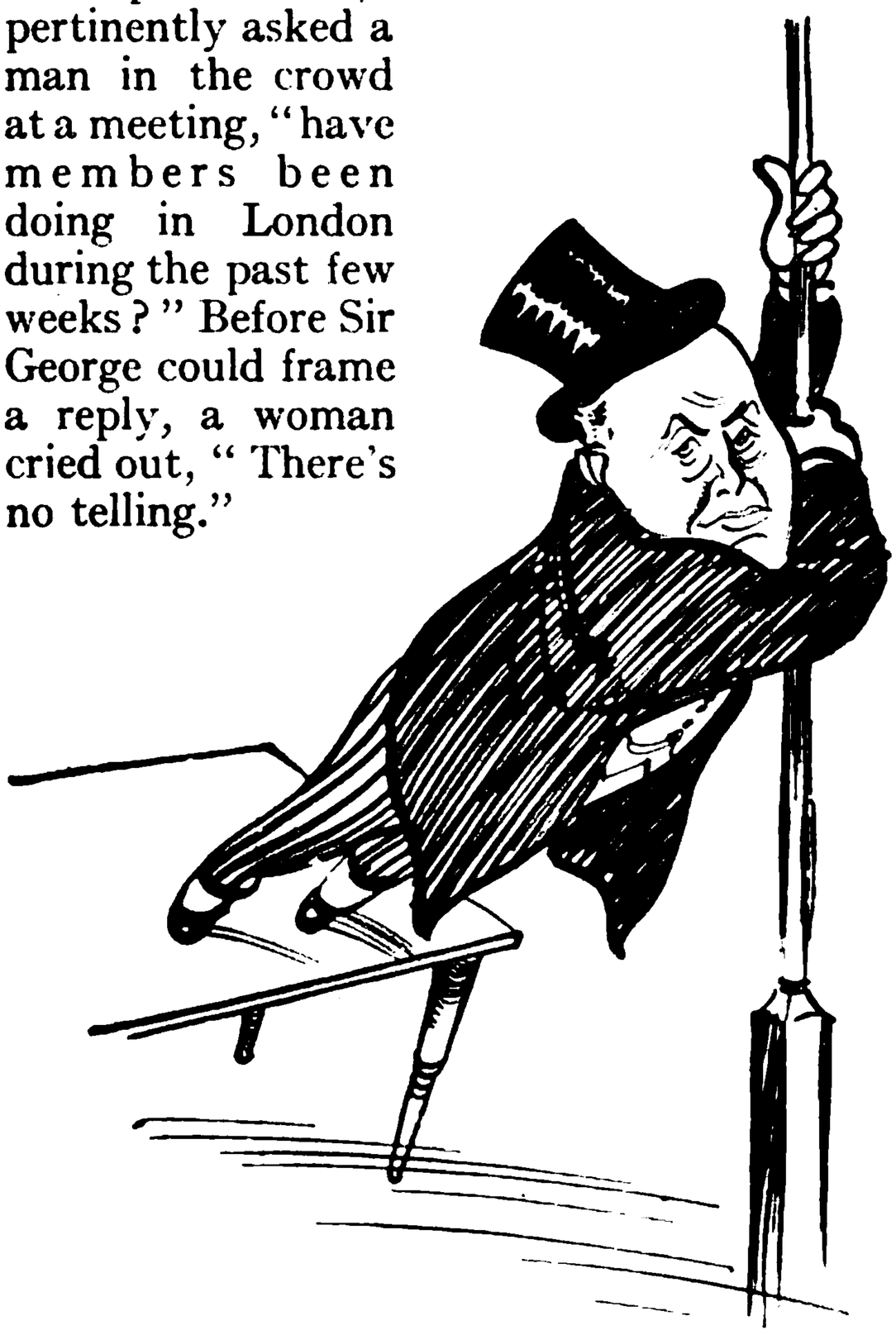
And the late Lord Furness was the victim of an amusing *bon mot* when he was contesting York against Lord Charles Beresford. To the aid of Lord Charles came his two brothers, and the trio were cordially chaffed on the number of Beresfords in the field. But "Charlie" was ready with the apt retort: "Yes, here we are — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, come to save you from the fiery Furness."

Election stories, of course, are legion, and perhaps one of the best, concerning the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is that which appears in Dr. Farquharson's Reminiscences. Mr. Lloyd George was speaking at a Liberal meeting not a hundred miles from Redhill, Surrey, of the unfulfilled prophecies and promises of a certain statesman, and quite accidentally he stretched his arm right over the head of Sir Jeremiah Colman, one of the local pillars of Liberalism, who was sitting close to him on the platform. "We have had enough of those political Jeremiahs," he cried out. The audience rose to the joke, and laughed and clapped vociferously. And perhaps for the first time in his life the little Welshman stood completely nonplussed, for it was not until the meeting was over that he found out where the humour had come in.

The "champion barker," or stump orator, of the Tariff Reform party, as Sir George Doughty, the member for Grimsby, has been described, relates how on one occasion at an open-air meeting in Hull the table on which he was standing commenced to rock. Sir George, flinging out his arms for the nearest support, clutched a lamp-post, and remarked that they were useful to hang on to sometimes.

"Yes, and you're not the only man who's found that out!" shouted a wag in the crowd.

Sir George Doughty's amusing if embarrassing experience calls to mind that of Sir George Kemp. "What," pertinently asked a man in the crowd at a meeting, "have members been doing in London during the past few weeks?" Before Sir George could frame a reply, a woman cried out, "There's no telling."



"SIR GEORGE, FLINGING OUT HIS ARMS FOR THE NEAREST SUPPORT, CLUTCHED A LAMP-POST."

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And apparently there are others who are suspicious of the doings of M.P.'s in town, judging by a story which Mr. J. A. Pease tells of the days when he was Liberal Whip. During an all-night sitting of the House of Commons a certain member was, as he thought, absent. The gentleman was really present at every division, but he was snatching sleep at intervals in one of the recesses of the House. Mr. Pease, however, not having noticed him in the division lobby, sent a telegram to his house at seven o'clock in the morning, saying, "Come down at once and relieve the guard and those at work all night." The member turned up at his own house at eight o'clock in the morning, and expected to find a warm welcome from his wife and family and a good deal of sympathy for having been in the House all night. But his wife's greeting was, "Where have you been?" He replied, "I have been at the House at an all-night sitting." "Now it's no use you telling me lies," said the good lady, and she produced from under the pillow Mr. Pease's telegram.



"YOU KNOW, DADDY, YOU ARE A BIG MAN IN OUR KITCHEN, BUT YOU AIN'T MUCH HERE."

Dr. Macnamara managed to score when an excited old lady demanded at one of his meetings, "Are you in favour of the repeal of the biasphemy laws?"

"Madam," was the grave reply, "I am a golfer."

The most appreciated election story which Dr. "Mac" tells, however, is that of an occasion when he was speaking in the central hall of a large Board school. In the rooms around the hall were numbers of side-shows.

"I arrived late," said Dr. Macnamara, "and had some difficulty in making a path through the crowded hall. Finding my way barred by an exceedingly good-looking young lady leaning on the arm of an exceedingly good-looking young gentleman, I could not help overhearing the following conversation:—

"What's on here to-night, George?"

"Oh, some speechifying, I believe."

"Who is speaking?"

"Dr. Macnamara."

"Let's go back to one of the dark classrooms, George."

Neither is this young lady the only one who has no very exalted idea of our legislators.

"Some of the members," says Will Crooks, when telling this story against himself, "fancy themselves very much when showing friends round the House. When I was first elected, however, I remember as I took my daughter through Westminster Hall she said to me, 'You know, daddy, you are a big man in our kitchen, but you ain't much here.'"

And disagreeable people assert that there are many electors who echo the sentiments expressed by a constituent to one of the Rev. Sylvester Horne's canvassers at the election of 1910, which resulted in him being returned for Ipswich as the only active Congregational M.P. Mr. Horne relates how his canvasser happened upon an artisan reading the addresses and studying the faces of the two candidates.

"Well, what do you think of them?" asked the canvasser.

The voter shrugged his shoulders and said nothing.

"Which candidate would you like to vote for?" persisted the other.

"Don't know anything about none of 'em," replied the British elector. "But what I see of 'em, I thank 'Eaven as only one can get in."

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QUAINT QUESTIONS.

By BARRY PAIN.

Illustrated by René Bull.

"WANT more string?" said Mrs. Hopper, as she drew her arms out of the washtub. "Anybody might think I was made of string, the way you go on. Why, I give you a great long piece only yesterday. Can't think what you do with all the string."

"Well, mother," said Dick, "I know what I did with that piece. First you took half of it back again."

"I don't want no impertinence. If parcels have to be done up, whose fault's that?"

"Then Tom took half of what was left to go fishing for stickly-backs in the canal—where there ain't none."

"Tom's your elder brother, and it's your place to give way to him."

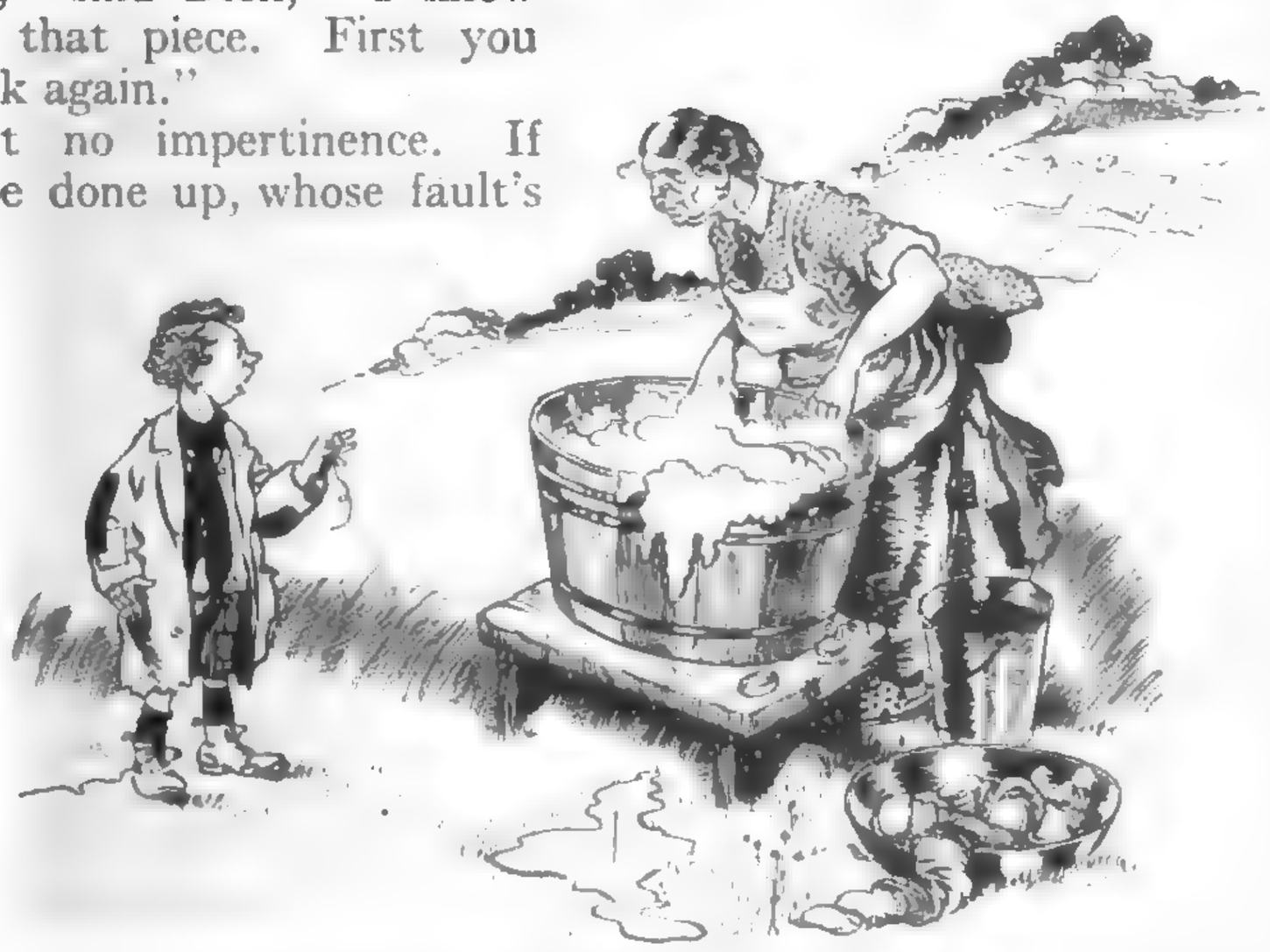
"Yes, I dare say; but it didn't leave much, and father took half of that to mend his braces what he broke through laughing at the motor-accident; and sister had three-fifths of what was left after to tie her hair back."

"Ah, but what did you do with all the rest of it?"

"All the rest of it! Why, there wasn't but nine inches left for myself, and how was I going to make a telephone of that?"

By a curious coincidence Mrs. Hopper was washing for a lady who possessed a square flower-bed, one side of which was just the length of the piece of string that Mrs. Hopper gave Dick. The lady meant to plant this bed with tulip-bulbs, one bulb to every square foot. She bought the requisite number of bulbs at seven shillings and sixpence per hundred, and paid for them with a sovereign. She received her change in the smallest number of coins in which it could be paid, which number, by another coincidence, gives us what we have been trying to get at all along—the height of Dick's sister in feet.

How tall was she?



"'WANT MORE STRING?' SAID MRS. HOPPER. 'ANYBODY MIGHT THINK I WAS MADE OF STRING.'"

It had not been a good year for apples, and Adam expected to do pretty well with those that he had picked from his orchard. When he got back from work in the evening, Eve, his wife, said to him:—

"Mr. Green of Pudley has been in, and he says he will give you two shillings and twopence a bushel for those five bushels of cookers."

"Will he?" said Mr. Smith. "No, thank you. I shall do better than that."

Sure enough, next day he sold a third of the apples at half a crown a bushel.

But after that his luck went wrong. Days passed, and there was no further bid. A quarter of a bushel of apples went bad and had to be thrown away. Adam was very glad to take two shillings a bushel for the remainder.

"You'd have done better to have taken Mr. Green's offer," said Eve. "But you never would listen to advice."

"Shouldn't have done so well," growled Adam.

Which of them was right?

Old Josh came into the village market-place with a cheap line of rugs. They were all uniform in size, quality, colour, and design.

The first customer took some rugs, and Josh charged her three shillings each. The second customer took some rugs, and Josh charged her two shillings and eightpence each.

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The third took some rugs, and she got them for two shillings and threepence each.

The local policeman, who had watched the three transactions, now stepped up.

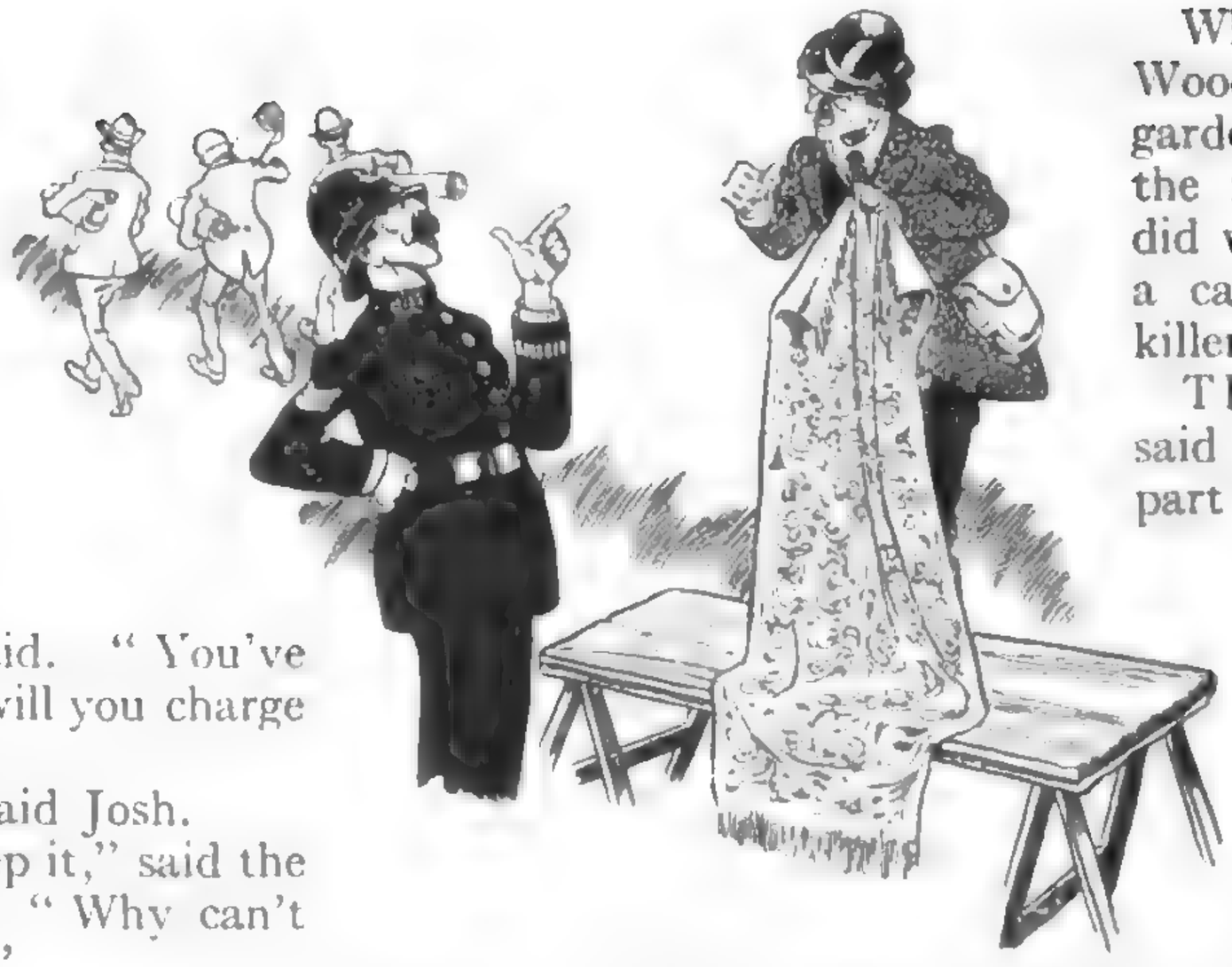
"Price of those rugs seems to be going down," he said. "You've only one left. What will you charge me for it?"

"Four shillings," said Josh.

"Then you can keep it," said the disgusted policeman. "Why can't you treat me fairly?"

"I am the fairest man in the market," said Josh. "My motto is to serve all alike. I make the same profit out of every customer, whatever the customer buys, much or little."

How many rugs had Josh to sell?



"'YOU CAN KEEP IT,' SAID THE DISGUSTED POLICEMAN. 'WHY CAN'T YOU TREAT ME FAIRLY?'"

"Never before did I produce a play on April 1st," said the manager, "and I never will again. It's unlucky. I thought that piece would carry us right through to the autumn, and we've only had twenty-eight performances out of it."

"How often a week did you show?" asked the actor.

"Six evenings and Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. We closed on Good Friday and the Saturday following. We slipped in an extra *matinée* on Bank Holiday, but the end was in sight even then, and next Monday we began our last six performances."

What day of the month was Easter Sunday that year, and what day of the week was March 3rd?



"'NEVER BEFORE DID I PRODUCE A PLAY ON APRIL 1ST,' SAID THE MANAGER."

When young Mr. Woodhead took to gardening, one of the first things he did was to mix up a canful of weed-killer.

The directions said: "Use one part of this solution to three parts of water."

Mr. Woodhead, being what he was, read these directions, procured an old breakfast-cup, and poured one cup of water and three cups of the solution into the can.

Then he discovered his mistake. "Got that just wrong," he said. "However, it is easy put right. It should have been three parts of water. All I have got to do is to add two more cups of water." This he did.

He then added one cup of solution and three cups of water quite correctly.

And then the can began to leak. "Golly!" he said. "If I had known I wouldn't have stood it on the lawn." He got another can and transferred the mixture to it, but one-fifteenth of it had run away and was lost.

There was still room in the can, and he now added one cup of solution and (by inadvertence) four cups of water. He thought he had now got as much as he wanted. There was, in fact, precisely one gallon of the mixture.

How much did his breakfast-cup hold, and how did his mixture differ from what was required by the directions?

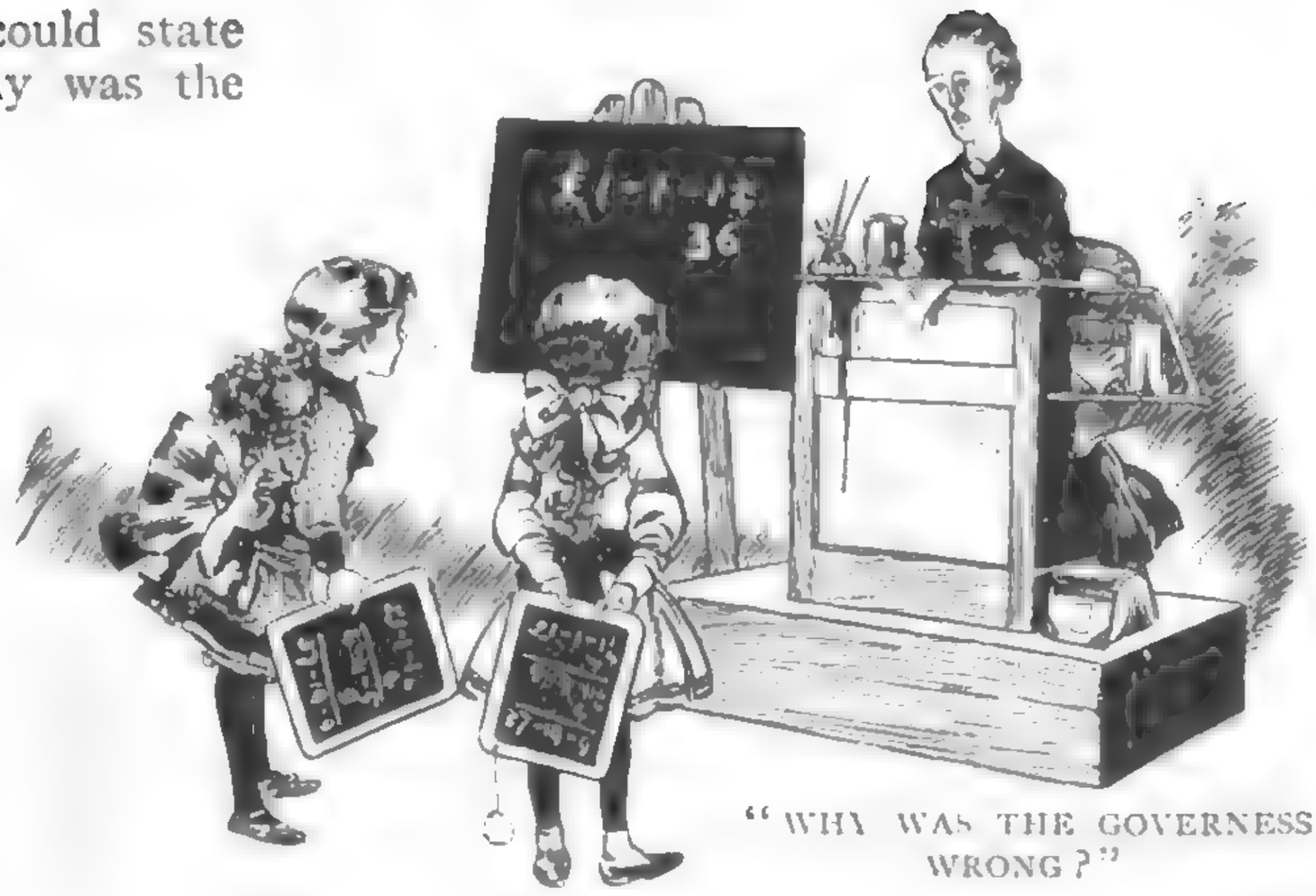
The governess gave the two little girls this sum to do: Multiply £1 1s. 1¼d. by 36.

The first little girl multiplied by nine and then multiplied the result by four. Her answer was correct.

The second little girl multiplied first by four and then by nine. Her answer was also correct. The governess gave both little girls the same marks.

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Given that the second child could state her reason for her working, why was the governess wrong?



"WHY WAS THE GOVERNESS WRONG?"

"This picture, 10in. by $8\frac{3}{8}$in., just fills that bare space on the wall," said the Enthusiast.

"It is not a picture — it is an etching," said the Pedant. "And the actual etched surface is only $4\frac{1}{2}$in. by 3in. What you mean is, that the picture-frame fills the space."

"Got you!" exclaimed the Enthusiast. "The picture-frame, being only $\frac{1}{2}$in. broad, cannot cover a surface 10in. by $8\frac{3}{8}$in. It only covers the exterior of it. Within the picture-frame is a gilt slip, having a visible breadth of $\frac{1}{4}$in., and inside that again is the white mount before you come to the etching. Now, then, how much surface is covered by the visible white mount?"

The Pedant did a few figures on his shirt-cuff for five seconds.

"You should never frame a decent etching close up like that," he said. "You should leave a margin to show the paper on which it is produced and the signature. However, as you have chosen to do it that way, and since you ask me, the visible superficies of the white mount is $48_{\frac{13}{142787}}$ square inches."

"By Jove, that's smart!" said the Enthusiast. "What a head you must have! I could never have done it in the time."

As a matter of fact, the Pedant had not done it. He had merely made a wild shot at it, knowing that the poor Enthusiast would be deceived. The Pedant's wild shot was wrong.

By how much was it wrong?



"'BY JOVE, THAT'S SMART!' SAID THE ENTHUSIAST. 'WHAT A HEAD YOU MUST HAVE!'"

Crankley was very pleased with his new clock, which could be locked up so that you could not get at the hands or the regulator. You could wind it up with a different key, but that was all you could do.

Crankley put the regulator to S, and found that the clock lost five and a half minutes every twenty-four hours. He then put the regulator at F, and found that the clock gained three and a quarter minutes every twenty-four hours.

"Now I can work out at what point between S and F I should put the regulator," he said, and at twelve noon set the hands correctly and moved the regulator, as he believed, to the required point. But he had made a mistake, and put the regulator just as near to S as it should have been to F. He then locked the clock, dropped the key and lost it, and realized his mistake. But he kept the clock wound and hoped for the best.

He found the key at twelve noon, though it was nine by his clock. How long had the key been lost?

(*Solutions next month.*)

Answers to Last Month's "Quaint Questions."

1. Half a pint of distilled water weighs 10oz. Using the clasp as a weight ($6\frac{1}{2}$oz.), weigh 13oz. of tea. Using the water as a weight, take 10oz. from the 13oz., leaving 3oz. of tea. Using the 3oz. of tea as a weight, weigh three further ounces of tea, and put the 6oz. thus obtained aside on a sheet of paper. Using the water as a weight, weigh 10oz. of tea, and add them to the 6oz. already on the paper. (The operation can be performed in more than one way.)
2. Three o'clock.
3. Two miles, three furlongs, eight poles.
4. Ninety-six children and twenty-seven chairs.

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Wet Magic.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

By E. NESBIT. Illustrated by H. R. Millar.

CHAPTER IV.

IT is hardly possible to imagine a situation less attractive than that of Mavis and Francis. Even the position of the mermaid curled up in a dry barrow and far from her native element was not exactly luxurious. Still, she was no worse off than she had been when the lariat first curled itself about her fishy extremity. But the children! They had braved the terrors of night in an adventure of singular courage and daring. They had carried out their desperate enterprise. The mermaid was rescued, success seemed near—no farther off than the sea, indeed, and that, in point of fact, was about a quarter of a mile away. To be within a quarter of a mile of achievement, and then to have the cup of victory dashed from your lips, the crown of victory torn from your brow by—the police!

It was indeed hard. And what was more, it was dangerous.

"We shall pass the night in the cells," thought Mavis, in agony, "and whatever will mother do when she finds we're gone?"

In her mind the "cells" were underground dungeons, dark, damp, and vaulted, where toads and lizards crawled, and no daylight ever penetrated. That is how dungeons are described in books about the Inquisition.

A sudden hand had shot out from a bush and caught Francis by the arm, and when he said, "What is it?" the answer was, "The police!"

A stricken silence followed. The mouth of Francis felt dry inside, just as if he had

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been eating cracknels, he explained afterwards, and he had to swallow nothing before he could say :—

"What for?"

"Let go his arm," said Mavis. "We won't run away. Really we won't."

"You can't," said the mermaid. "You can't leave *me*."

"Leave go," said Francis, wriggling.

And then suddenly Mavis made a dart at the clutching hand and caught it by the wrist, and whispered savagely :—

"It's not a policeman at all. Come out of that bush—come out," and dragged. And something did come out of the bush, something that certainly was not a policeman. It was small and thin, whereas policemen are almost always tall and stout. It did not wear the blue coat our Roberts wear, but velveteen trousers and a tweed jacket. It was, in fact, a very small boy.

Francis broke into a cackle of relief.

"You little—animal!" he said. "What a fright you gave me!"

"Animal yourself, if you come to that, let alone her and her tail," the boy answered, and Mavis thought his voice didn't sound unfriendly. "My! but I did take a rise out of you that time, eh? Ain't she bit you yet, nor yet strook you with that there mackerel-end of hers?"

And then they recognized him. It was the little spangled boy. Only now, of course, being off duty, he was no more spangled than you and I are.

"Whatever did you do it for?" Mavis asked, crossly. "It was horrid of you."

"It wasn't only just a lark," said the boy. "I cut round and listened this afternoon when you was jawing, and I thought why not be in it. Only I do sleep that heavy, what with the riding and the tumbling, and all. So I didn't wake till you'd got her out, and then I cut up along ahind the hedge to be beforehand with you. And I was. It was a fair cop, matey, eh?"

"What are you going to do about it?" Francis asked, flatly. "Tell your father?"

But Mavis reflected that he didn't seem to have told his father yet, and perhaps wouldn't.

"Ain't got no father," said the spangled boy, "nor yet mother."

"If you are rested enough you'd better go on," said the mermaid. "I'm getting dry through."

And Mavis understood that to her that was as bad as getting wet through would be to us.

"I'm so sorry," she said, gently, "but—"

"I must say I think it's very inconsiderate of you to keep me all this time in the dry," the mermaid went on. "I really should have thought even *you*——"

But Francis interrupted her.

"What are you going to *do*?" he asked the spangled boy. And that surprising child answered, spitting on his hands and rubbing them :—

"Do? Why, give a 'and with the barrer."

The mermaid put out a white arm and touched his.

"You are a hero," she said. "I can recognize true nobility even under a once spangled exterior. You may kiss my hand."

"Well, of all the——" said Francis.

"Shall I?" the boy asked, more of himself than of the others.

"Do," Mavis whispered. "And try to keep her in a good temper."

So the spangled boy kissed the still dampish hand of the lady from the sea, took the handles of the barrow, and off they all went.

Mavis and Francis were too thankful for this unexpected help to ask any questions, though they could not help wondering exactly what it felt like to be a boy who did not mind stealing his own circus's mermaid. It was the boy himself who offered, at the next rest-halt, an explanation.

"You see," he said, "it's like this here. This party in the barrer——"

"I know you don't mean it disrespectfully," said the mermaid, sweetly, "but *not* party, and *not* a barrow."

"Lady," suggested Mavis.

"This lydy in the chariot, she's been kidnapped. That's how I look at it. Same as what I was."

This was romance indeed, and Mavis recognized it, and said :—

"You kidnapped? I say!"

"Yus," said Spangles. "When I was a baby kid. Old Mother Romaine told me, just afore she was took all down one side, and never spoke no more."

"But why?" Mavis asked. "I never could understand in the books why gipsies kidnapped babies. They always seem to have so many of their own—far, far more than anyone could possibly want."

"Yes, indeed," said the mermaid. "They prodded at me with sticks—a multitude of them."

"It wasn't kids as was wanted," said the boy. "It was revenge. That's what Mother Romaine said. My father, he was a sort of beak, and he give George Lee eighteen months for poaching. And the day they took him

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the church bells was ringing like mad, and George as he was being took said, 'What's all that row? It ain't Sunday.' And then they tells him as how the bells was ringing cause him that was the beak—my father, you know—he'd got a son and heir, and that was me. You wouldn't think it to look at me," he added, spitting pensively, and taking up the barrow handles. "But I'm a son and heir."

"And then what happened?" Mavis asked, as they trudged on.

"Oh, George, he done his time, and I was a kiddie then—year and a half old, all lace and ribbons and blue shoes made of glove stuff, and George pinched me, and it makes me breff short wheeling and talking."



"'OH, LOOK!' SHE CRIED. 'ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL? ISN'T IT THE ONLY HOME IN THE WORLD?'"

"Pause and rest, my spangled friend," said the mermaid, in a voice of honey. "Continue your thrilling narrative."

"There ain't no more to it," said the boy, "except that I got one of the shoes. Old Mother Romaine 'ad kep' it, and a little shirt like a lady's handkercher, with 'R.V.' on it in needlework. She didn't even tell me what part of the country my dad was beak in. Said she'd tell me next day. An' then there wasn't no next day for her—not for telling things in, there wasn't."

He rubbed his sleeve across his eyes.

"She warn't half a bad sort," he explained.

"Don't cry," said Mavis, uneasily.

"Cry? Me?" he answered, scornfully. "I've got a cold in me 'ead. You oughter know the difference between cold in the head and snivelling. You been to school, I lay. They might have taught you that."

"I wonder the gipsies didn't take the shoe and the shirt away from you."

"Nobody know'd I'd got it. I always kep' it inside my shirt, tied round in a bit of paper, and when I put on me tights I used to hide it. I'm agoing to take the road one of these days and find out who it was lost a kid with blue shoes and shirt nine years come April."

"Then you're ten and a half?" said Mavis.

And the boy answered admiringly:—

"How do you do it in your head so quick, miss? Yes, that's what I am."

Here the wheelbarrow resumed its rather bumpety progress, and nothing more could be said till the next stoppage, which was at that spot where the sea-front road swings round and down, and glides into the beach so gently that you can hardly tell where one begins and the other ends. It was much lighter there than up on the waste space. The moon was just breaking through a fluffy white cloud, and cast a trembling sort of reflection on the sea. As they came down the slope all hands were needed to

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steady the barrow, because as soon as she saw the sea the mermaid began to jump up and down like a small child at a Christmas-tree.

"Oh, look!" she cried. "Isn't it beautiful? Isn't it the only home in the world?"

"Not quite," said the boy.

"Ah!" said the lady in the barrow. "Of course, you're heir to one of the—what is it?"

"Stately homes of England. How beautiful they stand," said Mavis.

"Yes," said the lady. "I knew by instinct that he was of noble birth."

> "I bid you take care of the brat," said he,
> "For he comes of a noble race,"

Francis hummed. He was feeling a little cross and sore. He and Mavis had had all the anxious trouble of the adventure, and now the spangled boy was the only one the mermaid was nice to. It was certainly hard.

"But your stately home would not do for me at all," she went on. "My home is in caves of coral and pearl—so cosy and delightful and wet. Now, can you push the chariot to the water's edge, or will you carry me?"

"Not much we won't," the spangled boy answered, firmly. "We'll push you as far as we can, and then you'll have to wriggle."

"I will do whatever you suggest," she said, amiably. "But what is this wriggle of which you speak?"

"Like a worm," said Francis.

"Or an eel," said Mavis.

"Nasty low things," said the mermaid, and the children never knew whether she meant the worm and the eel, or the girl and the boy.

"Now, then, all together," said the spangled child. And the barrow bumped down to the very edge of the rocks. And at the very edge its wheel caught in a chink, and the barrow went sideways. Nobody could help it, but the mermaid was tumbled out of her chariot on to the seaweed.

The seaweed was full and cushiony and soft, and she was not hurt at all, but she was very angry.

"You have been to school," she said, "as my noble preserver reminds you. You might have learned how not to upset chariots."

"It's we who are your preservers," Francis couldn't help saying.

"Of course you are," she said, coolly. "Plain preservers, not noble ones. But I forgive you. You can't help being common and clumsy. I suppose it's your nature—just as it's his to be——"

"Good-bye," said Francis.

"Not at all," said the lady. "You must come with me in case there are any places where I can't exercise the elegant and vermiform accomplishment you spoke about. Now, one on each side and one behind, and don't walk on my tail. You can't think how annoying it is to have your tail walked on."

"Oh, can't I?" said Mavis. "I'll tell you something. My mother has a tail, too."

"I *say!*" said Francis.

But the spangled child understood.

"She don't wear it every day, though," he said, and Mavis is almost sure that he winked, only it is so difficult to be sure about winks in the starlight.

"Your mother must be better born than I supposed," said the mermaid. "Are you *quite* sure about the tail?"

"I've trodden on it often," said Mavis, and then Francis saw.

Wriggling and sliding and pushing herself along by her hands, and helped now and then by the hands of the others, the mermaid was at last got to the edge of the water.

"How glorious! In a moment I shall be quite wet," she cried.

In a moment everyone else was quite wet also. For with a movement that was something between a squirm and a jump she dropped from the edge with a splashing flop, and disappeared entirely.

CHAPTER V.

THE three children looked at each other.

"Well!" said Mavis.

"I do think she's ungrateful," said Francis.

"What did you expect?" asked the spangled child.

They were all wet through. It was very late, they were very tired, and the clouds were putting the moon to bed in a very great hurry. The mermaid was gone; the whole adventure was ended.

There was nothing to do but to go home and go to sleep, knowing that when they woke the next morning it would be to a day in the course of which they would have to explain their wet clothes to their parents.

"Even *you'll* have to do that," Mavis reminded the spangled boy.

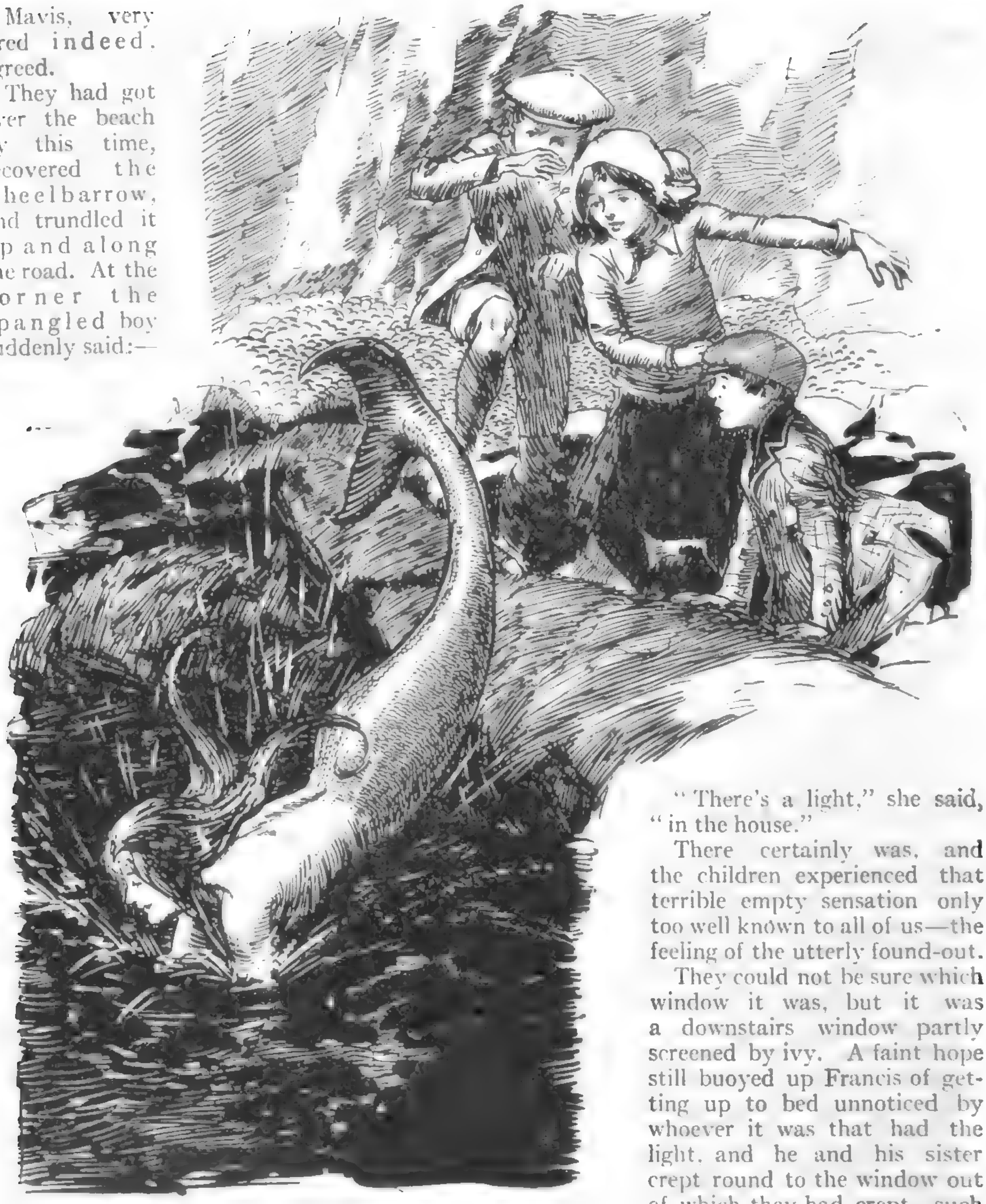
He received her remark in what they afterwards remembered to have been a curiously deep silence.

"I don't know how on earth we are to explain," said Francis. "I really don't. Come on, let's get home. No more adventures for me, thank you. Bernard knew what he was talking about."

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Mavis, very tired indeed, agreed.

They had got over the beach by this time, recovered the wheelbarrow, and trundled it up and along the road. At the corner the spangled boy suddenly said:—



"SHE DROPPED FROM THE EDGE WITH A SPLASHING FLOP, AND DISAPPEARED ENTIRELY."

"Well, then, so long, old sports," and vanished down a side lane.

The other two went on together with the wheelbarrow, which, I may remind you, was as wet as any of them.

They went along by the hedge and the mill and up to the house.

Suddenly Mavis clutched at her brother's arm.

"There's a light," she said, "in the house."

There certainly was, and the children experienced that terrible empty sensation only too well known to all of us—the feeling of the utterly found-out.

They could not be sure which window it was, but it was a downstairs window partly screened by ivy. A faint hope still buoyed up Francis of getting up to bed unnoticed by whoever it was that had the light, and he and his sister crept round to the window out of which they had crept—such a very long time ago it seemed.

The window was shut.

Francis suggested hiding in the mill and trying to creep in unobserved later on, but Mavis said:—

"No, I'm too tired for anything. I'm too tired to *live*, I think. Let's go in and get it over, and then we can go to bed and sleep and sleep and sleep."

So they went and peeped in at the kitchen window, and there was no one but Mrs.

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Pearce, and she had a fire lighted, and was putting a big pot on it.

The children went to the back door and opened it.

"You're early, for sure," said Mrs. Pearce, not turning.

This seemed a bitter sarcasm. It was too much. Mavis answered it with a sob, and at that Mrs. Pearce turned very quickly.

"What to gracious!" she said. "Whatever to gracious is the matter? Where've you been?" She took Mavis by the shoulder. "Why, you're all sopping wet. You naughty, naughty little gell, you. Wait till I tell your ma—— You've been shrimping, I lay, or trying to—never asking when the tide was right. And not a shrimp to show for it, I know, with the tide where it is. You wait till we hear what your ma's got to say about it. And look at my clean flags, and you dripping all over 'em like a fortnight's wash in wet weather."

Mavis twisted a little in Mrs. Pearce's grasp.

"Oh, don't scold us, dear Mrs. Pearce," she said, putting a wet arm up towards Mrs. Pearce's neck. "We *are* so miserable."

"And so you deserve to be," said Mrs. Pearce, smartly. "Here, young chap, you go into the wash-house and get them things off, and drop them outside the door, and have a good rub with the jack-towel, and little miss can undress by the fire and put hern in this clean pail, and I'll pop up soft-like so as your ma don't hear, and bring you down something dry."

A gleam of hope fell across the children's hearts, a gleam wild and watery as that which the moonlight had cast across the sea into which the mermaid had disappeared. Perhaps after all Mrs. Pearce wasn't going to tell mother. If she was, why should she pop up soft-like? Perhaps she would keep their secret. Perhaps she would dry their clothes. Perhaps after all that impossible explanation would never have to be given.

The kitchen was a pleasant place, with bright brasses and shining crockery, and a round table with a clean cloth and blue and white tea-cups on it.

Mrs. Pearce came down with their night-gowns and the warm dressing-gowns that Aunt Enid had put in, in spite of their expressed wishes. How glad they were of them now!

"There, that's a bit more like," said Mrs. Pearce. "Here, don't look as if I was going to eat you, you little Peter Grievouses. I'll hot up some milk, and here's a morsel of bread and dripping to keep the cold out. Lucky for you I was up getting the boys' breakfast ready. The boats'll be in directly. The boys will laugh when I tell them."

"Oh, don't tell," said Mavis.



"'WHAT TO GRACIOUS!' SHE SAID 'WHATEVER TO GRACIOUS IS THE MATTER?'"

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"Don't, please don't. Please, please don't."

"Well, I like that," said Mrs. Pearce, pouring herself some tea from a pot which the children learned later stood on the hob all day and most of the night. "It's the funniest piece I've heard this many a day. Shrimping at high tide."

"I thought," said Mavis, "perhaps you'd forgive us, and dry our clothes, and not tell anybody."

"Oh, you did, did you?" said Mrs. Pearce. "Anything else?"

"No, nothing else, thank you," said Mavis. "Only I want to say thank you for being so kind, and please we haven't done any harm to the barrow. But I'm afraid it's rather wet, and we oughtn't to have taken it without asking, I know. But you were in bed, and——"

"The barrow?" Mrs. Pearce repeated. "That great hulking barrow—you took the barrow to bring the shrimps home in? No, I can't keep it to myself—that I really can't."

She lay back in the arm-chair and shook with silent laughter.

The children looked at each other. It is not pleasant to be laughed at, especially for something you have never done, but they both felt that Mrs. Pearce would have laughed quite as much, or even more, if they had told her what it really was they had wanted the barrow for.

"Oh, don't go on laughing," said Mavis, creeping close to Mrs. Pearce, "though you *are* a ducky darling not to be cross any more. And you won't tell, will you?"

"Ah, well, I'll let you off this time. But you'll promise faithful never to do it again, now, won't you?"

"We faithfully won't, ever," said both children, earnestly.

"Then off you go to your beds, an' I'll dry the things when your ma's out, an' I'll press 'em to-morrow morning while I'm waiting for the boys to come in."

"You *are* an angel," said Mavis, embracing her.

"More than you are, then, you young limbs," said Mrs. Pearce, returning the embrace. "Now, off you go, and get what sleep you can."

It was with a feeling that Fate had not after all been so very harsh with them that Mavis and Francis came down to a very late breakfast.

"Your ma and pa's gone off on their bikes," said Mrs. Pearce, bringing in the eggs and bacon, "and won't be back till dinner. So I framed to let you have your sleep out. The little 'uns had their breakfast three hours ago, and are out on the sands. I told them to let you sleep, though I know they wanted to hear how many shrimps you caught. I lay they expected a barrowful, same as what you did."

"How did you know they knew we'd been out?" Francis asked.

"Oh, the way they was being secret in corners and looking the old barrow all over was enough to make a cat laugh. Hurry up, now. I've got the washing-up to do, and your things is well-nigh dry."

"You *are* a darling," said Mavis. "Suppose you'd been different, whatever would have become of us?"

"You'd 'a' got your deserts—bed and bread and water, instead of this nice egg and bacon and the sands to play on. So now you know," said Mrs. Pearce.

On the sands they found Kathleen and Bernard, and it really now, in the bright, warm sunshine, seemed almost worth while to have gone through last night's adventures if only for the pleasure of telling the tale of them to the two who had been safe and warm and dry in bed all the time.

"Though really," said Mavis, when her tale was told, "sitting here and seeing the tents and the children digging and the ladies knitting and the gentlemen smoking and throwing stones, it does hardly seem as though there *could* be any magic. And yet, you know, there was."

"It's like I told you about radium and things," said Bernard. "Things aren't magic because they haven't been found out yet. There's always been mermaids, of course, only people didn't know it."

"But she talks," said Francis.

"Why not?" asked Bernard, placidly. "Even parrots do that."

"But she talks English," Mavis urged.

"Well," said Bernard, unmoved, "what would you have had her talk?"

And so, in pretty sunshine, between blue sky and gold sands, the adventure of the mermaid seemed to come to an end—to be now only a tale that is told. And when the four went slowly home to dinner, all were, I think, a little sad that this should be so.

"Let's go round and have a look at the empty barrow," Mavis said. "It'll bring it all back to us, and remind us of what was in it, like ladies' gloves and troubadours."

The barrow was where they had left it, but it was not empty. A very dirty piece

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of folded paper lay in it, addressed in pencilled and uncertain characters, "To France. To be opened."

He opened it, and read aloud :—

"I went back, and she came back, and she wants you to come back at ded of nite.—Rube."

"Well, I sha'n't go," said Francis.

"But you *must* manage it somehow," said Kathleen. "You can't let it drop like this. I sha'n't believe it was magic at all, if you do."

"If you were us you'd have had enough of magic," said Francis. "Why don't you go yourselves—you and Bernard?"

"I've a good mind to," said Bernard,



"'YOU SEEM VERY FOND OF HIDING IN BUSHES,' SAID FRANCIS.'"

A voice from the bush by the gate made them all start.

"Don't let on you see me," said the spangled boy, putting his head out cautiously.

"You seem very fond of hiding in bushes," said Francis.

"I am," said the boy, briefly. "Ain't you going—to see her again, I mean?"

"No," said Francis. "I've had enough dead of night to last me a long time."

"You a-going, miss?" the boy asked. "No? You are a half-livered crew. It'll be only me, I suppose."

"You're going, then?"

"Well," said the boy, "what do you think?

"I should go if I were you," said Bernard, impartially.

"No, you wouldn't, not if you were me," said Francis. "You don't know how disagreeable she was. I'm fed up with her. And, besides, we simply *can't* get out at dead of night now. Mrs. Pearce'll be on the lookout. No, it's no go."

unexpectedly. "Only not in the middle of the night, because of my being certain to drop my boots. Would you come, Cathay?"

"You know I wanted to before," said Kathleen, reproachfully.

"But how?" the others asked.

"Oh," said Bernard, "we must think about that. I say, you chap, we must get to our dinners. Will you be here after?"

"Yes. I ain't going to move from here. You might bring me a bit of grub with you. I ain't had a bite since yesterday tea-time."

"I say!" said Francis, kindly. "Did they stop your grub to punish you for getting wet?"

"They didn't know nothing about my getting wet," he said. "I didn't never go back to the tents. I've cut my lucky, I 'ave; 'ooked it, skedaddled, done a bunk, run away."

"And where are you going?"

"*I* dunno," said the spangled boy. "I'm running *from*, not to."

(*To be continued.*)

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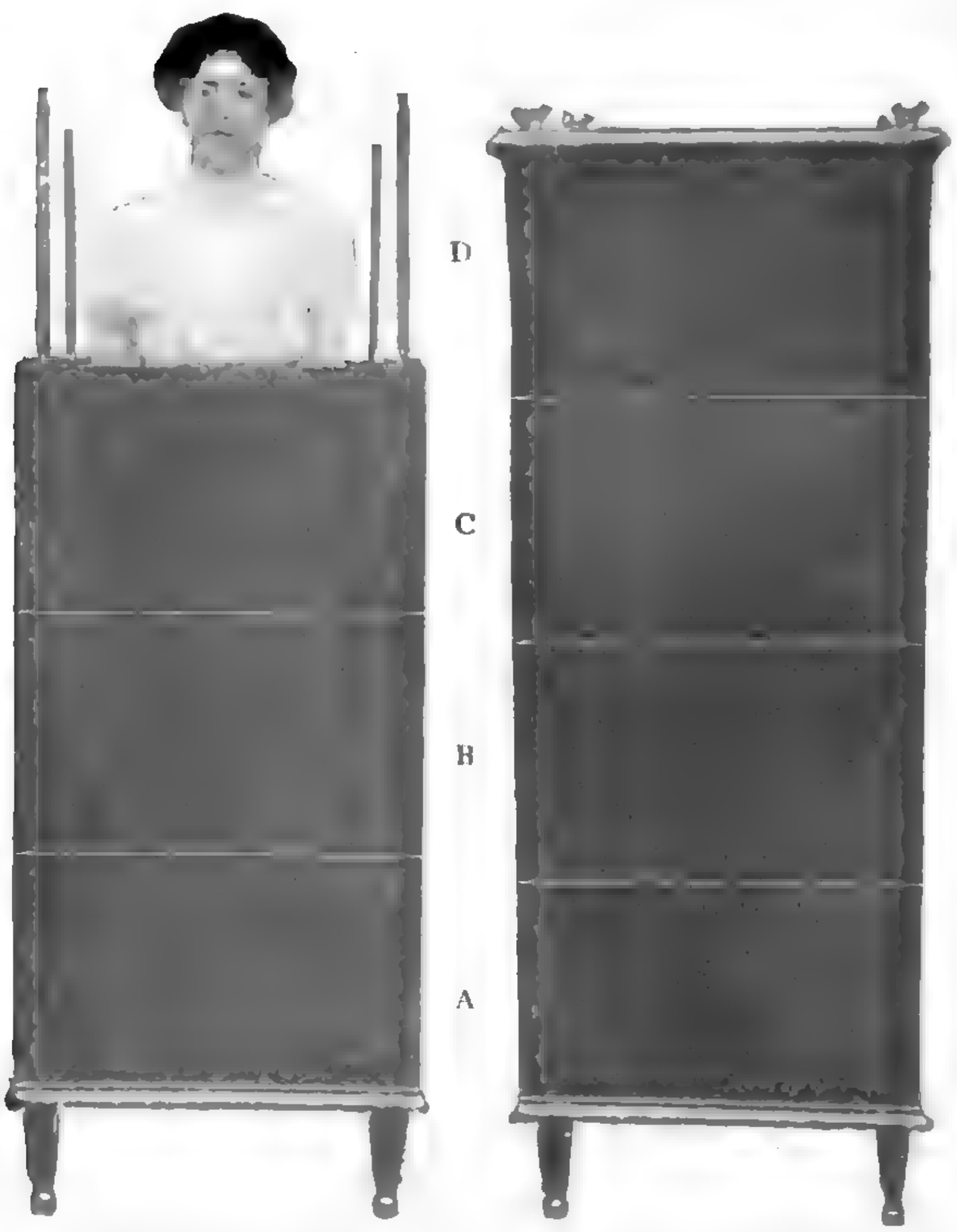
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MULTUM IN PARVO.

A Compendium of Short Articles.

The Mysterious Spiritualistic Séance.

A mystery, which has baffled some of the greatest scientists of the day, exposed and fully explained for the first time by A. D. Ross.



1. SHOWS THREE SECTIONS WITH THE SECURING BOLTS IN POSITION AND THE MEDIUM INSIDE.

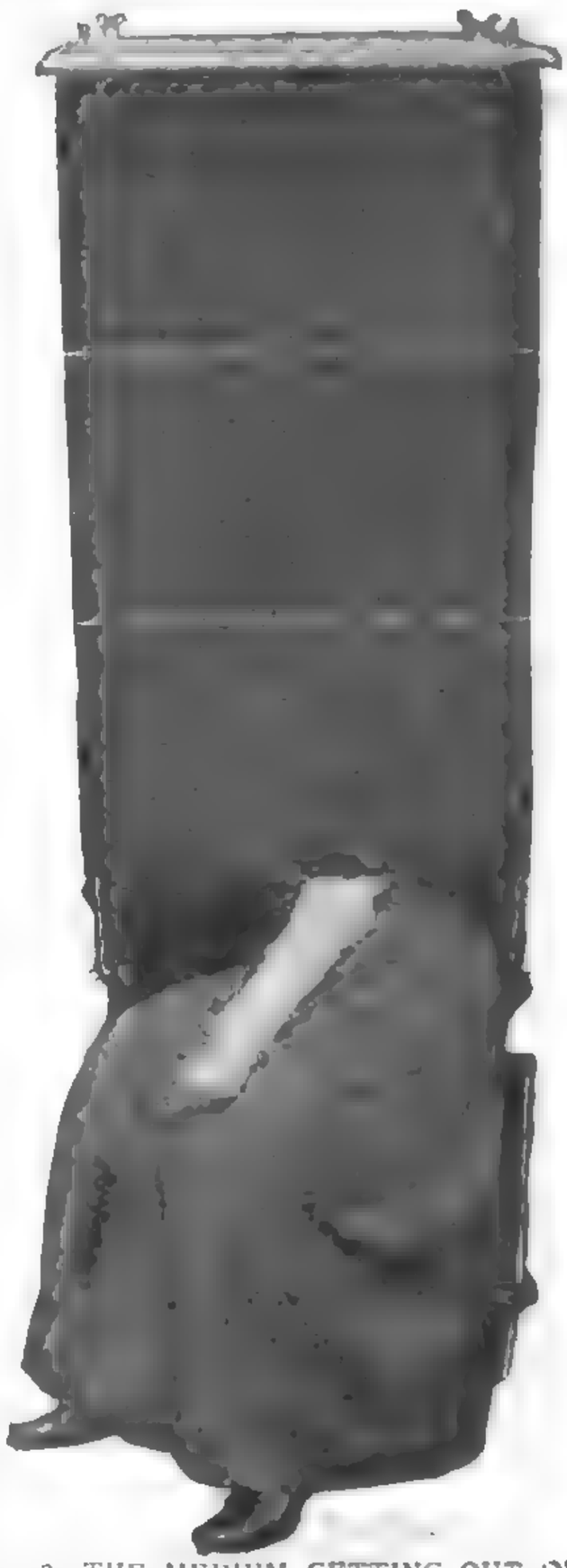
2. THE CABINET COMPLETED AND SECURELY BOLTED DOWN WITH THE WINGED NUTS AT THE TOP.

THE remarkable cabinet which plays such a leading part in the séance I am about to describe was for many years used by a well-known illusionist as part of his programme, and though the séance has been attended by nearly all the leading members of the magical profession and spiritualistic body, its secret absolutely baffled them, and they gave it up as inscrutable. The writer has in his possession a letter from Victor Hugo, in which this great and level-headed man goes so far as to say that in his opinion the matter deserves the attention of scientists. So easily are great men deceived. The description of the séance is as follows :—

The company having assembled in a suitable room, they are introduced to the medium, and are then shown the parts of a cabinet in which the medium is to be securely incarcerated. An examination of the parts of the cabinet proves it to be a perfectly straightforward piece of the cabinet-maker's art, everything about it being of a most substantial and solid character. A violin, pianoforte, bell, or such other articles as may be decided upon, are also included in the inspection. The company then proceed to build up the cabinet around the lady in the manner now about to be described, ultimately securely bolting and locking her therein, so that there is absolutely no possibility of passing anything in to or out from her.

The second illustration shows that the cabinet is formed of four box-like parts, each eighteen inches square and fifteen inches deep. A has a solid bottom and rests on four six-inch legs. B and C have no top or bottom; while D has a solid top. Each section has a triangular piece of wood glued into each corner, their object being to strengthen the sections, and also to act as a guide and hold to the four iron rods that bolt the sections together, each piece of wood having a hole bored through it to permit the passage of the rods. Fig. 1 shows sections A, B, and C, with the securing bolts in position and the medium inside. Fig. 2 shows the cabinet finished and securely bolted down with the winged nuts at the top. These nuts may be sealed over in any way that suggests itself to the audience.

The assembled guests then proceed to handcuff themselves together and form a circle round the cabinet, so that it is quite impossible to enter or leave the circle without some of the assembly being acquainted with the fact. The lights are then put out, and the spirit manifestations take place. For instance, a member of the company may desire a certain tune played on the violin, and immediately it is responded to on the violin inside the circle. On the lights being again turned up the cabinet is found to be quite intact, with the medium still inside. Another test is then desired, and a piano brought into the circle is then heard



3. THE MEDIUM GETTING OUT OF THE CABINET.

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playing any air requested by anyone present. Of course, any number of tests may be arranged, and in every case the medium readily accomplishes them. As a *finale* the usual spirit rappings take place, when the lights are turned up, and to the surprise of everybody the lady acting as the medium, who was so securely locked in the cabinet, is now found to be outside it, standing in the circle. Yet on close and minute examination the cabinet is found to be quite secure and intact, and all locks and bolts sealed as left by the committee of investigation.



4. SHOWS HOW THE ROD APPEARS. A AND B ARE THE THREADS.



5. SHOWS THE JOINT (B—B) AT ONE END, WHICH IS HIDDEN BY THE THREADS OF THE SCREW.



6. A TO C IS THE SOLID PART OF THE ROD, AND C IS THE STUD D TURNS ON.

The explanation and secret of the whole thing is in the very simple yet ingenious locking arrangement, for the cabinet itself is a perfectly solid and well-made piece of cabinet work without any fake or trickery about it.

It lies in the construction of the simple-looking iron rods which bolt the cabinet together. These rods appear to be quite ordinary, and may be subjected to the closest scrutiny without fear of their secret being divulged. Fig. 4 shows the rods screwed at both ends, A and B, for about an inch and a half to receive the locking-nuts. At one end, however, about an inch and a quarter in from the end (see Fig. 5), and hidden by the threads of the screw, there is a joint. The main rod at this end is bored for about fifteen inches, the hole thus drilled being fitted with a rod having at one end the one and a quarter inches of threaded rod of the same diameter as the main rod, and on the other end a small catch which on turning engages with a stud, C, and so securely locks the two portions together, making to all appearances a solid rod (see Fig. 6). When the medium is fastened inside she takes with her, hidden under her skirt, two small steel stays about twelve inches long, and a finely-made pair of tongs wherewith to grip the rods between the cracks of the sections. When the whole thing has been secured, she can, by gripping the rods in turn by the tongs, and giving each one a half turn, unlock the inner rod from the stud C, when the cabinet, or such sections as she desires, may be pushed up, and by the insertion of the two steel stays in her possession kept up in position to enable her to get out of the cabinet (see Fig. 3). Then, of course, the playing of the violin or other manifestations is quite simple.

In exposing this particular séance the writer positively asserts that all spiritualistic manifestations with which he is acquainted (and they are many) are the result of trickery.

Stamp Decoration as a Fine Art.

WHAT are probably the most elaborate examples of decorative work ever carried out entirely with postage-stamps are shown in the accompanying photograph. As will be seen, an entire bedroom suite is most tastefully ornamented with postage-stamps—all of them, by the way, being those of the United States—and the whole of the work has been done by one man, Mr. Robert B. Blanken, of Philadelphia. He commenced it when only fifteen years of age, and it was several years before it was completed. The suite, which includes a full-size double bedstead, is ornamented with a great variety of pleasing designs, the chief charm of which —their colour — is, of course, not realized in our reproduction. In decorating the bed alone more than forty-six thousand pieces of stamps were used, and the time taken in collecting the stamps, which were the cleanest picked from more than four hundred thousand, was over four years.



ALL THE DECORATION IN THIS ROOM IS DONE WITH POSTAGE-STAMPS.

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MULTUM IN PARVO.

The Queerest Insect on Earth.

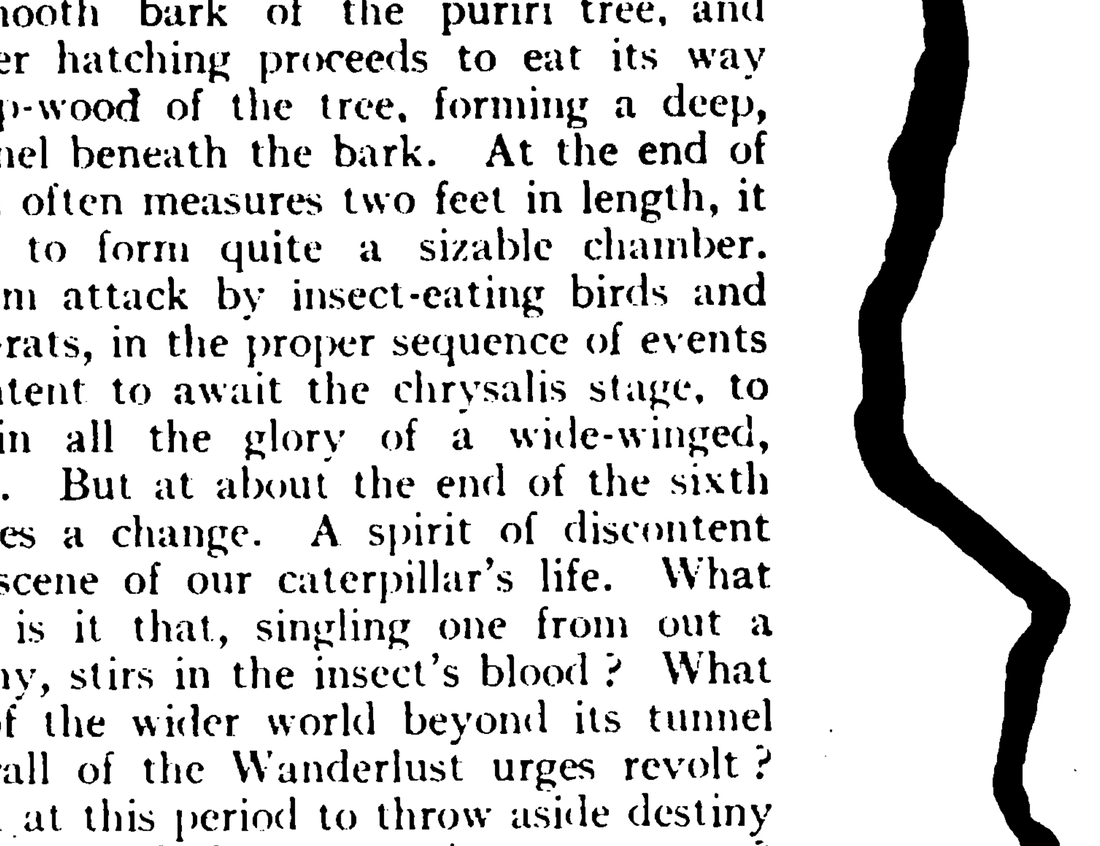
BY D. W. O. FAGAN.

AS an instance of what Mother Nature can do, in freakish mood, to puzzle the wits of the Nature student, it would be hard to find a creature presenting more curious features than the pepe-aweto. Hardly surpassed in wonder, even by the platypus, *Hipealis virescens* (the pepe-aweto of the Maoris) sets us a problem in biology absolutely confounding in its paradoxical contradiction. But it is as a link between the animal and vegetable kingdoms that this caterpillar-vegetable owes its chief and absorbing interest.

Let the reader imagine a sleek, white caterpillar, varying in length from three to four and a half inches, and a full half-inch in diameter. Add a healthy, green plant-stem that sprouts vigorously from the creature's neck, and one has a good picture of the pepe-aweto's appearance at an early stage of its existence. Is it insect or vegetable? He would be a bold layman who should pronounce offhand. But let us follow this queer creature from its commencement.

At the outset there is nothing that distinguishes the pepe-aweto from other large caterpillars of the same family. Larva of the big puriri-moth, it is hatched, one of a numerous family of brother and sister eggs, beneath the smooth bark of the puriri tree, and immediately after hatching proceeds to eat its way into the soft sap-wood of the tree, forming a deep, longitudinal tunnel beneath the bark. At the end of its tunnel, which often measures two feet in length, it scoops a cavity to form quite a sizable chamber. Here, secure from attack by insect-eating birds and marauding bush-rats, in the proper sequence of events it should be content to await the chrysalis stage, to emerge finally in all the glory of a wide-winged, silver-grey moth. But at about the end of the sixth week there comes a change. A spirit of discontent comes o'er the scene of our caterpillar's life. What strange instinct is it that, singling one from out a numerous progeny, stirs in the insect's blood? What whispers to it of the wider world beyond its tunnel walls? What call of the Wanderlust urges revolt? What counsels it at this period to throw aside destiny and embark on a career of adventure on its own account? For this is exactly what happens. Bidding farewell to stay-at-home brothers and sisters, our caterpillar creeps from its snug quarters, crawls down the tree-trunk, and away across the forest floor to see the world.

Thus far it has been all plain sailing. The creature's life has been open to the observer. When next we come across it, however, our caterpillar, we find, has struck up an acquaintance with a *mauvais sujet* in the shape of a vegetable fungus-spore.



THE QUEEREST INSECT ON EARTH—A LINK BETWEEN THE ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE KINGDOMS.

The undesirable has been literally picked up, for it is whilst burrowing in the mould of the dark places of the forest that the spore lodges on the caterpillar's neck, and, clamping itself firmly with hook-like tentacles between the head and the first ring-like fold of the body, refuses to be got rid of.

The fungus-spore—classified scientifically as *Sphæria Robertsii*—loses no time, but, germinating where it has lodged, pushes its roots into the body of its host, and at the same time sends forth a stem at right angles to the insect's neck.

At the commencement of this sort of partnership existence, and until the plant-stem attains to a height of two or three inches, the presence of its parasitic guest apparently causes the caterpillar little inconvenience, and on disturbing the soil around the tree-roots it may be found moving freely among the loose humus, bearing the budding plant-stem on its back. The respite is short, however. The young plant grows apace, and the caterpillar, giving up the battle, performs its own obsequies, burying itself to the depth of two or three inches at the root of a tree.

From this time forth its body becomes an animal tuber to a vegetable growth. The plant develops with a quite malign vitality, and, penetrating the soil above the insect's body, stands up to a height of ten or twelve inches above the ground. The mature plant, which resembles a diminutive bulrush, consists solely of a single stem, fleshy and of a pale green colour, without leaves, and capped by the brown felt-like head so familiar in bulrushes.

On ripening, the head, or seed-pod, bursts open, scattering a host of fresh fungus-spores, to be again picked up by next season's generation of caterpillars. The bursting of the pod marks the end. Plant and tuber both die, becoming dry and hard, with only a slight diminution of living size, and our original caterpillar has become wood.

During the process of growth the fine rootlets of the plant have interpenetrated the caterpillar's body, exactly filling it in every particular, and, with no alteration of shape in the slightest degree, have substituted a vegetable for an animal substance. So delicately has this process been carried out that no structural change is observable. On cross-section under the microscope the alimentary canal and other organs of the caterpillar's body are shown with no trace of displacement whatsoever.

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MULTUM IN PARVO.

Egg-Shell Carving.

BY GEORGE W. WIGGLESWORTH.

SOME years ago you published some photographs of eggs carved by native craftsmen, and these coming into the hands of a client of mine, Mr. Walter Fisher, a marble mason, he conceived the idea of improving on them, and so purchased an emu egg. The peculiarity of this shell is that, although comparatively very thin and hard, the outer colour is dark green; but as this is carved into it gradually goes lighter, passing through all the various degrees of shade to a very pale sea-green, then to pure white, and finally to a rich sky-blue.



NO. 1.

On the four sections you will note the remarkable effect which has been produced, although the four photographs very inadequately convey the *natural* rendering of the colours, as in not the smallest instance has any colouring matter been used.

The lake and sky are a rich blue, the latter being dotted with white, fleecy clouds, while the distant hills (No. 1), of a faint whity blue, are very effective against the grass in the mid-distance.



NO. 2.

In No. 3 note the hunter on the bank—whose horse is feeding on the rich grass in the distance—stalking the emu, who, quite unsuspectingly, is drinking at the lake. Also his companion riding at full speed (No. 2 and No. 1) to intercept the fleeing kangaroos with their pair of young ones (No. 1 and No. 4), and observe the surprised look of the young one in No. 4.



NO. 3.

The entire egg is very artistically finished and exceedingly well executed, especially when one remembers that the shell is remarkably hard, and at the same time very thin—probably not one thirty-second of an inch thick—and that the colour, once cut through, cannot be replaced, to say nothing of the constant danger of piercing through the shell and thereby spoiling the whole work.



NO 4.

The size of the egg may be judged by the ordinary-sized egg-cup on which it stands, while it may be added that the whole of the work was done with a fine marble-mason's chisel.

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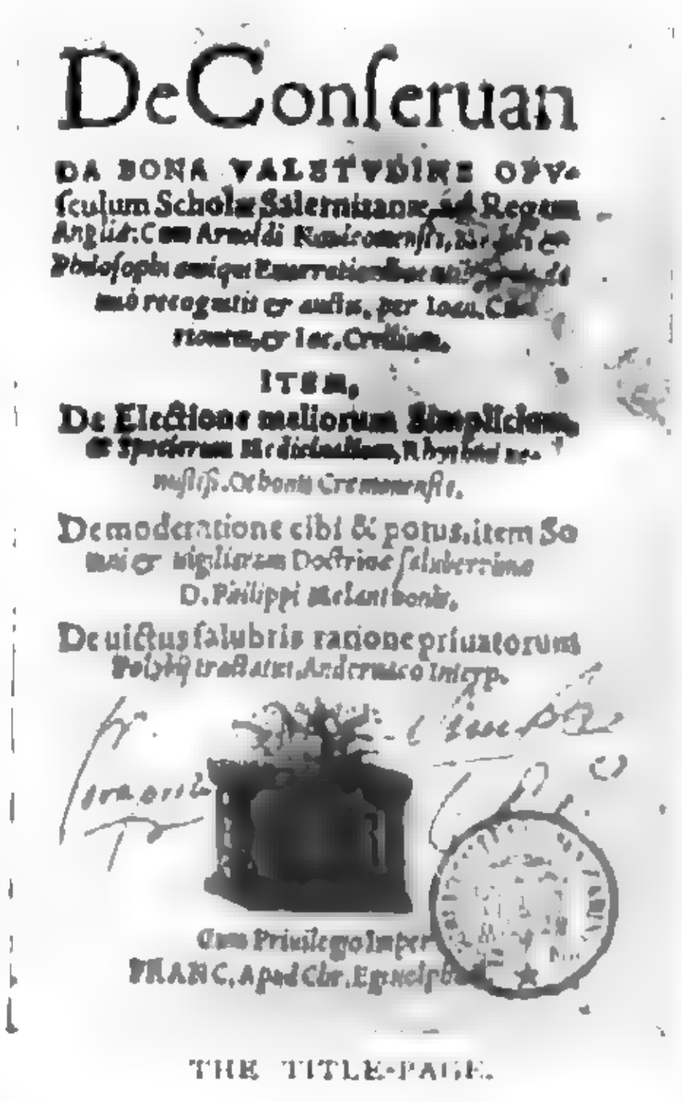
MULTUM IN PARVO.

An Ancient Code of Health.

BY M. E. LEE-JULIAN.

A FEW years ago a little book was sold in a Paris auction-room which realized sixteen thousand francs. The book itself, "The Aphorisms of the School of Salerno," is not at all scarce, but this was the rare Elzevir edition, hence the very high price which it fetched.

This remarkable work is interesting as a memento of the hygiene and medicine of the Middle Ages. It was composed in the Medical College of Salerno, which has existed since the time of Charlemagne. The college then formed part of the Benedictine convent of that town, and in succeeding years it attained a certain celebrity. It received official statutes from King Robert of Sicily, and no one could practise medicine or assume the title of doctor without the approval of the professors of Salerno. The college—or school, as it was then called—was regarded as the model for all the Universities of the period, and its doctrines, founded on the precepts of Galen, were everywhere recognized. It is still known because of its famous Code of Health, which was compiled by the greatest doctors of the day, and which was for centuries the chief authority on things medical all over Europe.


De Conseruan
DA BONA VALETVDINE OPVsculum Scholæ Salernitanæ, ad Regem Angliæ: Cum Arnoldi Nouicomensis, de Philosophia eorum Enarrationibus nusquam hactenus de nouo recognitis & auctis, per Ioan. Curionem, & Ier. Crellium.
ITEM,
De Electione meliorum Simplicium, & Specierum Medicinalium, Rhythmi recentissimi Octauiani Cremonensis.
De moderatione cibi & potus, item Somni & vigiliarum Doctrina salubernima D. Philippi Melanthonis.
De victus salubris ratione priuatorum Politici tractatus, Andernaci Interp.
Cum Priuilegio Imper.
FRANC. Apud Clar. Egnolph.

THE TITLE-PAGE.

The first line of this curious code is a dedication to "Angloru Regi," from which certain writers infer that it was compiled for one of the kings of England, after a consultation with the learned professors on the subject of the Royal health. It is not known which king is meant. Some give the date as about 1066, and suppose it refers to Edward the Confessor. The surmise may be correct, as Edward's delicate state of health was the despair of his physicians for some time before he died. Others give it a later date, and say it was drawn up for Robert of Normandy, eldest son of William the Conqueror, who was wounded in the Crusades during the Siege of Jerusalem. On his way back the Prince stopped at Salerno to consult the physicians there; he recovered his health, and had so much confidence in the skill of his doctors that he desired them to compose him a set of rules to enable him, as far as possible, to avert the different diseases to which the human body is exposed.

The result was a collective Latin poem embodying most of the medical science which was at that time known. It was written by the most noted professors of the school, probablyabout the year 1100. The names of the authors are unknown, though it has been attributed to several of the doctors in succession; among others, Novoforo, Arnauld de Villeneuve, and more particularly to Jean de Milan. Originally the poem consisted of a little over three hundred lines, but they have been added to for purposes of explanation or contradiction, till at the present time they exceed three thousand.


Pone pale nutat, ut fit tibi longior ætas
Effœcuph fœnum, fit tibi parca Venus.

THE FRONTISPIECE.

These Aphorisms were to a certain extent the germ of all the medical faculties of Europe. A large number of them are in clever couplets, easy to remember, and each containing some wise precept. Some of them are not without charm and are singularly quaint. Many, especially those which refer to health, have passed into proverbs, and are still in daily use amongst us; while others, with the progress of science, have fallen into disrepute. They treat of food and drink, sleep and exercise, and give rigorous instructions as to the importance of blood-letting.

The work is divided into nine parts, but only the first and second are of interest. The first deals with hygiene, and from it most of our quotations are taken. The second teaches the value and uses of herbs in medicine, and is still an authority on that subject. As for the others, they have had their day, and are seldom referred to or quoted.

The poem commences with the dedication to the King. This is immediately followed by a few general directions in order to gain and retain health:—

"Avoid all anxiety. Never be angry. Eat little. Take exercise after meals. Never sleep in the daytime."

General rules are also given regarding hygiene; in the first place according to the seasons, then month by month. According to the doctrine of the School of Salerno, and which was practised by its professors:—

"Spring is the moment for exercise and the moderate enjoyment of pleasure, and especially for bleeding.

"In summer food and baths should be cold, and sobriety should be practised in all things.

"In autumn wine should be drunk in large quantities, to counteract the effects of fruit, which otherwise might produce painful maladies.

"Winter is the season for the pleasures of the table. Salt meats should be eaten, for they incite a craving for cold drinks, which are beneficial for the health. Tonics also should be used in winter."

The early doctors, like the modern ones, set great store on personal cleanliness, which the professors of Salerno considered an absolute necessity.

"Wash the hands before eating. Wash them also on leaving the table. Only by doing so can one retain health.

"Frequent washings of the eyes are good for the sight."

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The question of food is minutely examined; the different kinds are passed in review, from bread to stone-fruit and nuts. In one part we read that nuts are not considered to be good for the stomach, though in another part we are told that bitter almonds aid digestion. The ancient custom of taking wine with peaches, and nuts with raisins, is referred to in the code. The doctors prescribe the flesh of young animals, but in the case of fish it is quite the contrary; fishes should be old, or, at any rate, they should have reached maturity, otherwise they are bad for the health.



SHAPES IN WHICH BUTTER WAS MADE, AND CHURN FOR MAKING IT.

Numberless are the rules against excess in eating. Evidently the doctors were of the opinion of Galen, that it is not best to satisfy the appetite.

"Always leave the table hungry.

"If you would live long, put a check on all gluttony.

"In order to enjoy life, set bounds to the appetite.

"To have a tranquil night, eat a light dinner.

"After an egg drink a cup of wine.

"Wine soup satisfies hunger and brightens the view."

The well-known distich—

After luncheon sit awhile,
After dinner walk a mile,

is among the precepts of the School of Salerno. So also is the one advocating the use of apples—

Eat an apple going to bed,
And make the doctors beg their bread.

After the food come the drinks, and we have the qualities and effects of certain among them:—

"It is bad to drink cider and hydromel in June, for then they go to the head and render one stupid."

The beer of the period made from oats is also said to have the same effect. The learned doctors agree with St. Timothy in the matter of drinking wine:—

"Wine maketh glad the heart."

In certain cases, however, water is best.

"If the voice be hoarse, drink the wine the ducks drink."

But the most appalling thing is the incessant practice of blood-letting which the doctors prescribe. This most ancient, and at one time most popular, of medical operations was regarded as a remedy for every ailment. Though for many years it has fallen into disuse, the medical journals of America tell us that it is again to be considered a sovereign element in therapeutics. Be that as it may, on hygienic and preventive principles the lancet was held in high esteem by the professors of Salerno, who considered that:—

"It makes sad people joyous and calms irritable ones."

Certainly they attached great importance to it, and in the code give particular instructions as to how and when it should be practised. Fortunately they varied the times and seasons.

"In February the thumb should be bled. In April, the foot. It is unimportant where in May. In September bleed the arm. In December, the veins of the forehead."

In addition to these special rules, at certain periods the neck, the throat, the ankle, and the jugular vein all had to be operated upon. The procession of victims on a consulting day must have been a curious spectacle!

The injunctions as to walking exercise are very precise:—

"In the morning mount the hills. At midday walk in the woods, and in the evening on the banks of the river."

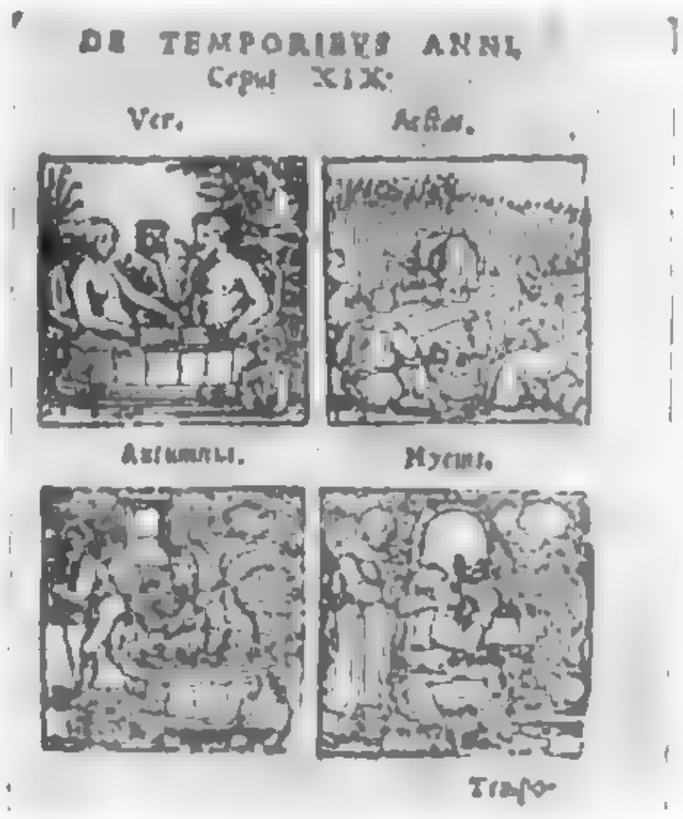
Among the precepts we find the celebrated lines regarding the time necessary for sleep:—

Six hours' refreshing sleep suffice for anyone,
Seven hours the lazy take, eight hours are good for none.

Curiously, however, these lines are followed by others which permit any amount of sleep, provided it is not on the stomach or on the back; and even go so far as to denounce the cruelty of waking people who are sleeping soundly!

The precepts of the learned doctors regarding the care of the sight are not sufficiently well known, and are worthy of the greatest consideration:—

If you would preserve your eyes you should often let them see
Clear streams of running water and the green of grass and tree.
Vary the things you look upon, and, to improve the sight,
In the morning scan the tree-tops and the brooks in fading light.



THE FOUR SEASONS.

As a book the Aphorisms had an enormous circulation. The number of editions through which it passed proves its celebrity through the whole of the Middle Ages. Two hundred and forty editions were published between 1474 and 1846, and many earlier MSS. of the work are still in existence. Summed up in a few words, the secret of health of the School of Salerno is almost entirely contained in one of its precepts:—

"Eat and drink little. Abstain from all kinds of excess, and be bled frequently."

Not so very different, except in the last clause, from the secret of health of the present day.

Of course, the poem gives remedies for certain maladies, and among them herbs and simples take a prominent place. The syrup of pine trees is indicated, as Norwegian tar now is with us, for consumption and affections of the chest. A mixture of wine and a certain form of alcohol is supposed to cure sea-sickness, and a decoction of nettles is said to be sovereign against the bite of serpents. As a rule, however, with the march of modern science, the remedies found in the work are not so valuable as the precepts themselves. Terse and laconic as they are, they are just as applicable and expressive now as when they were written nearly a thousand years ago.

The quaint engravings which illustrate this paper are copied, with the kind permission of the Conservateur of the Bibliothèque Mazarine, Paris, from a very rare edition of the famous code, which is carefully preserved in that celebrated library.



SHAPES OF FANCY BREAD

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PERPLEXITIES.

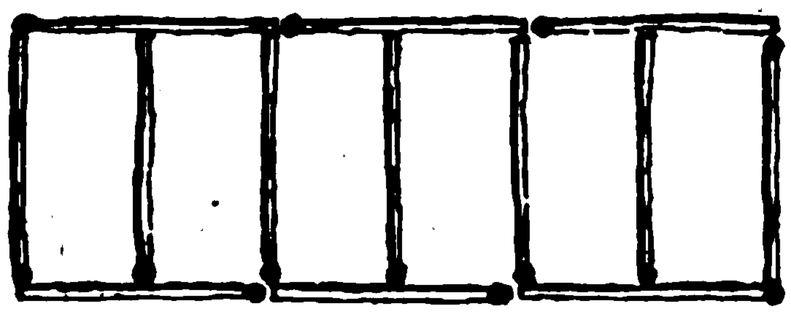
With Some Easy Puzzles for Beginners. By Henry E. Dudeney.

117.—REAPING THE CORN.

A FARMER had a square cornfield. The corn was all ripe for reaping, and, as he was short of men, it was arranged that he and his son should share the work between them. The farmer first cut one rod wide all round the square, thus leaving a smaller square of standing corn in the middle of the field. "Now," he said to his son, "I have cut my half of the field, and you can do your share." The son was not quite satisfied as to the proposed division of labour, and as the village schoolmaster happened to be passing he appealed to that person to decide the matter. He found the farmer was quite correct, provided there was no dispute as to the size of the field, and on this point they were agreed. Can you tell the area of the field, as that ingenious schoolmaster succeeded in doing?

118.—THE SIX SHEEP-PENS.

HERE is a new little puzzle with matches. It will be seen in the illustration that thirteen matches, representing a farmer's hurdles, have been so placed that they enclose six sheep-pens all of the same size. Now, one of these hurdles was stolen, and the farmer wanted still to enclose six pens of equal size with the remaining twelve. How was he to do it? All the twelve matches must be fairly used, and there must be no duplicated matches or loose ends.



119.—THE JUNIOR CLERKS' PUZZLE.

Two youths, bearing the pleasant names of Moggs and Snoggs, were employed as junior clerks by a merchant in Mincing Lane. They were both engaged at the same salary, *i.e.*, commencing at the rate of fifty pounds a year, payable half-yearly. Moggs had a yearly rise of five pounds, and Snoggs was given the same, only he asked, for reasons that do not concern our puzzle, that he might take his rise at two pounds ten shillings half-yearly, to which his employer had no objection.

Now we come to the real point of the puzzle. Moggs put regularly into the Post Office Savings Bank a certain proportion of his salary, while Snoggs saved twice as great a proportion of his, and at the end of five years they had together saved two hundred and sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings. How much had each saved? The question of interest can be ignored. We can see some innocent readers smiling at the childish simplicity of this little poser and "doing it in the head." But "wait and see."

120.—A CHARADE.

I STRUCK my *first* without any feeling of anger, and in consequence my *first* gradually became my *second*. Had the result been otherwise I could not have declared that my *first* was my *whole*.

121.—THE MOUSE AND THE CORN.

I PLUCKED nine ears of corn and threw them aside into a box. A mouse found out this little store and visited it daily; but, curious to relate, although it brought three ears out of the box each day, it took nine days to remove all the corn. How was this?

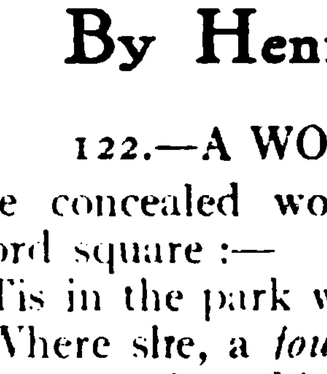
122.—A WORD SQUARE.

THE five concealed words in the following verse form a word square:—

"'Tis in the park we sometimes meet,
Where she, a *fourth*, is often found.
When turning *third*, myself to greet,
She scorns the *fifth* of those around.
My *second* is the name she bears,
And at her throat a *first* she wears.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.





109.—A CUTTING-OUT PUZZLE.

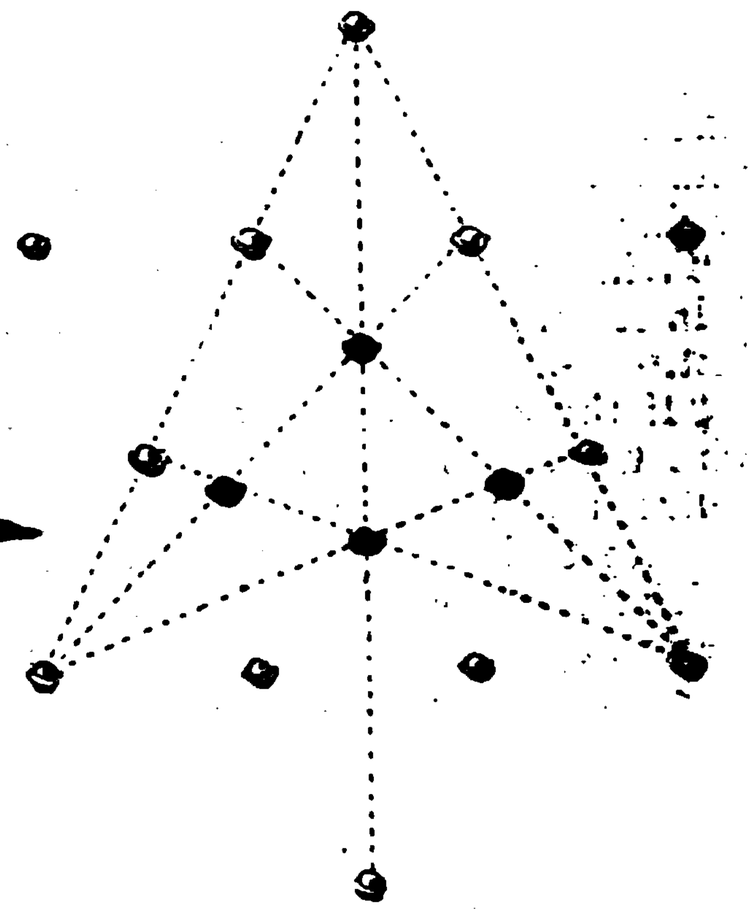
THE illustration shows how to cut the four pieces and form with them a square.

110.—A NEW MATCH MYSTERY.

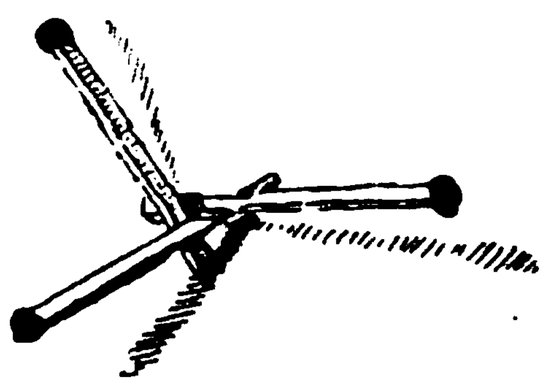
IF you form the three heaps (and are therefore the second to draw), any one of the following thirteen groupings will give you a win, if you play correctly: 15, 14, 1; 15, 13, 2; 15, 12, 3; 15, 11, 4; 15, 10, 5; 15, 9, 6; 15, 8, 7; 14, 13, 3; 14, 11, 5; 14, 9, 7; 13, 11, 6; 13, 10, 7; 12, 11, 7. But we have not space to give all the minor groups that the player must (and can) successively secure in order to ensure his winning.

111. THE TWELVE MINCE-PIES.

IF you ignore the four black pies in our illustration, the remaining twelve are in their original positions. Now remove the four detached pies to the places occupied by the black ones, and you will have your seven straight rows of four, as shown by the dotted lines.



112.—ARRANGE the three matches as shown in the illustration, and stand the box on end in the centre.



113.—OF course, the box cost a farthing.

114.—BETRAYAL and PARISHIONERS.

115.—STEAM, MATES, TEAMS, TAMES, MEATS.

116.—THE top row must be one of the four following numbers: 192, 219, 273, 327. The first was the example we gave.

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CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]



A CLEVER ILLUSION.

HERE is what I think you will consider a successful attempt at fake photography. The subject is a model of the steamer *Juno*, and is constructed from paper, cardboard, wire, pins, and thread. The length is about twenty inches. The model was placed on a polished table, which gave a reflection like water. The hills in the background were sketched on brown paper, and the sky consists of a white sheet behind the hills. To a casual observer the appearance is that of the real steamer at sea.—Mr. A. G. Houstoun, 11, Cambridge Drive, Glasgow.

TREES IN A CHURCH.

THE very unusual sight of two trees growing inside a church is to be seen at the Parish Church at Ross, Herefordshire. The vicar has allowed them to remain, realizing to the full their value from a financial point of view. Two shillings is charged for permission to photograph them, and doubtless many people attend service here on Sundays, especially in the summer, partly in order that they may see so strange a sight.—Mr. A. W. Cutler, Rose Hill House, Worcester.



A "LIME" TREE.

WITH a temperature of 110deg. in the shade, the tree shown in the photograph reproduced below seems strangely at



variance with Nature's ways. Not only the tree but the ground surrounding it was covered with a white powder resembling snow. The tree stood near a power-house, where the steam from the boiler enveloped it. The lime in the vapour remained on the branches in a fine powdery substance, thus giving a winter aspect to the spot.—Mr. L. M. Edholm, 4,624, Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A.

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ARE THEY THE OLDEST TRIPLETS?

I HAVE been advised by my doctor to send you the accompanying photograph, as he thinks it would prove of interest to many of your readers. It shows my two brothers and myself, who, having been born on August 25th, 1853, believe ourselves to be the oldest triplets living in England. When we were about four months old my mother was requested to attend at Buckingham Palace to receive the Queen's Bounty, and I still possess the invitation.—Miss E. Day, 36, Wharf Road, Latimer Road, North Kensington.

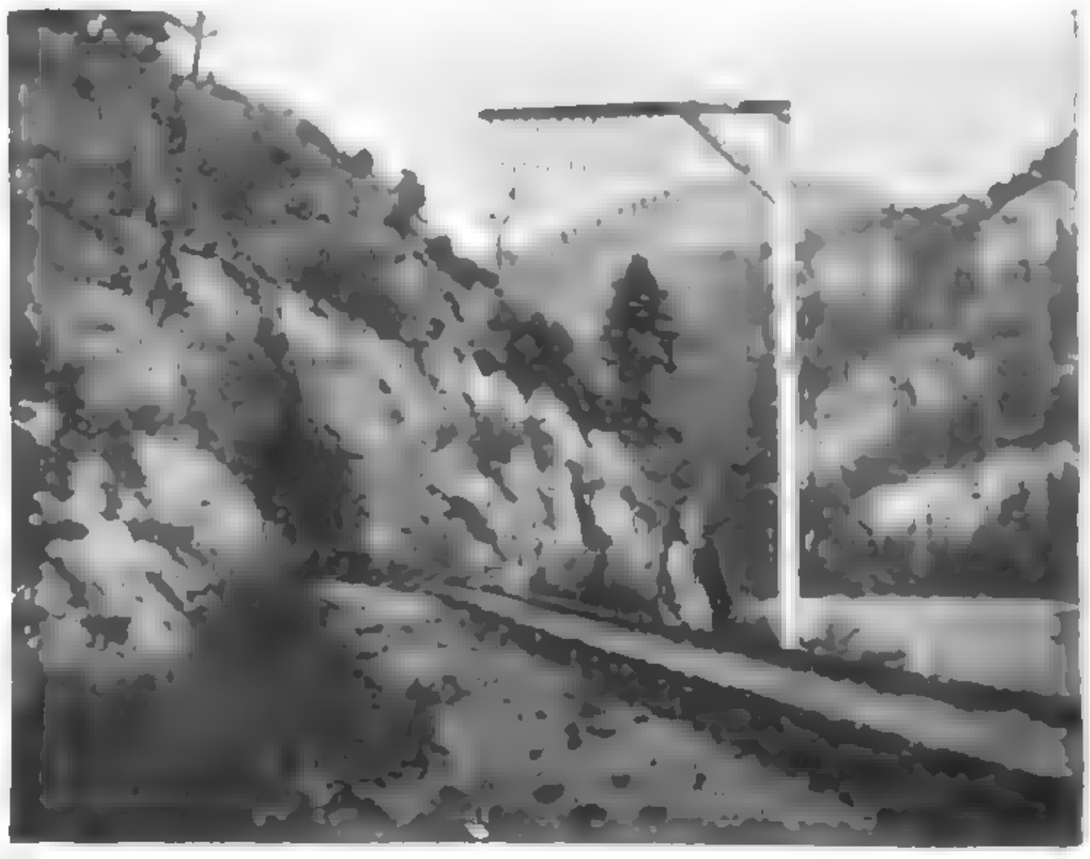


"HELP! I'M FALLING!"

THE figure of a man apparently falling from the eaves of a building to which he clings by both hands is the novel advertising scheme of an American firm. The figure is life-size, painted in natural colours, and, although really of metal, is so embossed as to stand out in relief, and to appear to be the body of a man struggling in distress. He carries an advertising placard, from which it may be inferred that he is a sandwich-man who has fallen off the roofs on which he was strolling.—Mr. Charlton Lawrence Edholm, 4,624, Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A.

"TELL-TALES" ON THE RAILWAY.

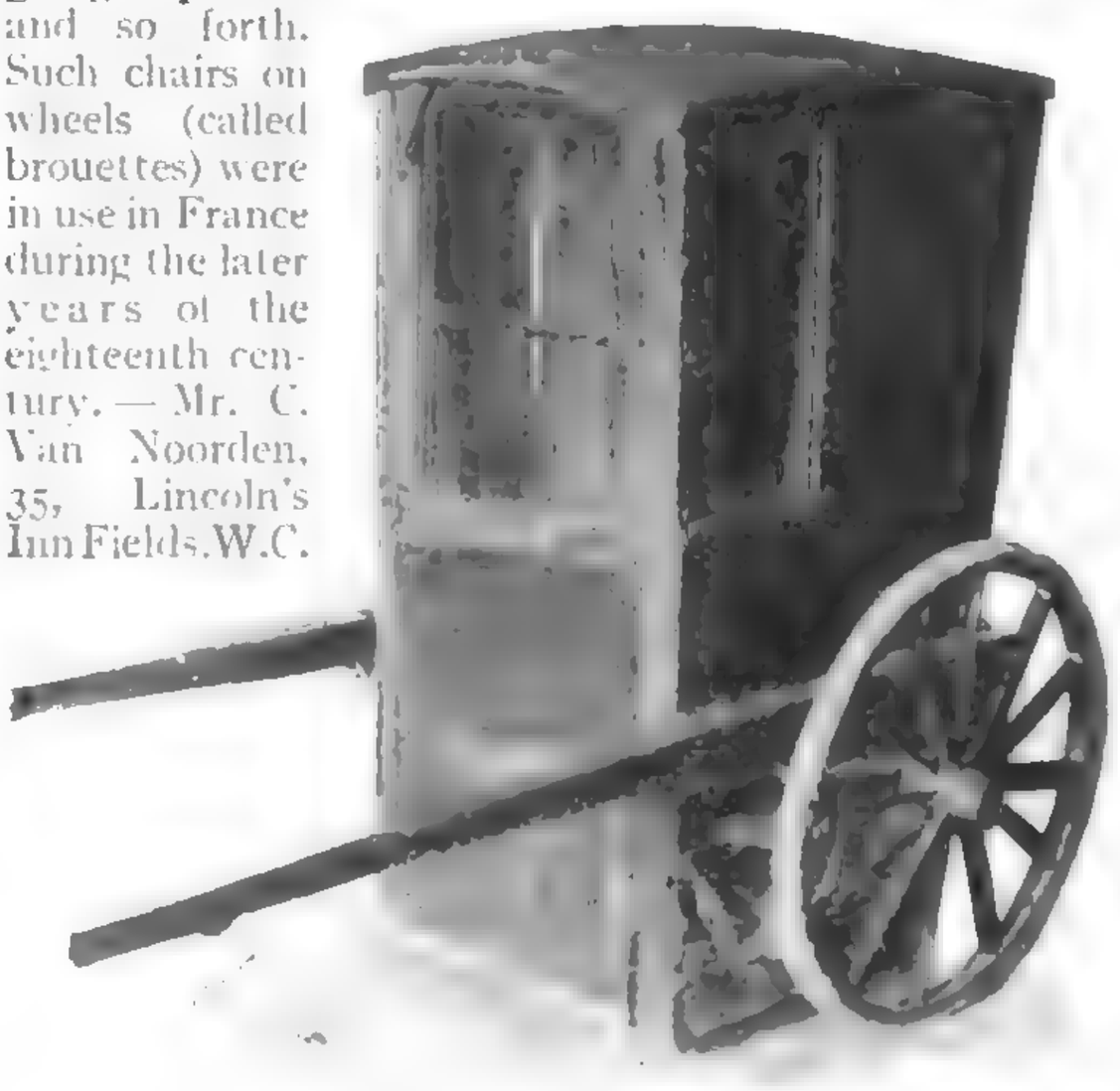
THE accompanying snap-shot was taken thirty-two miles from Nelson, the metropolis of the



Kootenays, B.C., on what is called here the Boundary Line, C.P. Railway. The tall post, which resembles a signal on a large scale, and with loose pieces of rope hanging from the extended arm over the track, is called a "tell-tale," and serves to warn trainmen, who run along the roofs of the big freight cars on their journeys of brake inspection, that a tunnel is close by. The rope-ends strike them harmlessly on the head, and allow them time to seek shelter between the cars before the train rushes into the tunnel. These "tell-tales" are placed at each end of the tunnels throughout British Columbia wherever the railway extends.—Mr. Charles Campion, Nelson, British Columbia.

A LINK WITH THE PAST.

THIS very interesting link between the Sedan chair and the hansom cab is now in the museum at Bury St. Edmunds. It is an old Sedan chair which has been placed on wheels, and was actually used up to a few years ago by an old lady of that town for going to parties and so forth. Such chairs on wheels (called brouettes) were in use in France during the later years of the eighteenth century.—Mr. C. Van Noorden, 35, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.



THE MISSING WORD.

LAST month we published a verse in which half-a-dozen words were left blank, each of these words being composed of the same six letters. The missing word in the first line is TINSEL, and from this the others will easily be found.

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"IT IS, IN MY OPINION, THE END OF THE WORLD."

(SEE PAGE 255.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. xlv. MARCH, 1913. No. 267.

THE POISON BELT.

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

Illustrated by Harry Rountree.

Being an account of another amazing adventure of Professor George E. Challenger, Lord John Roxton, Professor Summerlee, and Mr. E. D. Malone, the discoverers of "The Lost World."

CHAPTER I.

"THE BLURRING OF THE LINES."

IT is imperative that now at once, while these stupendous events are still clear in my mind, I should set them down with that exactness of detail which time may blur. But even as I do so, I am overwhelmed by the wonder of the fact that it should be our little group of the "Lost World"—Professor Challenger, Professor Summerlee, Lord John Roxton, and myself—who have passed through this amazing experience.

When, some years ago, I chronicled in the *Daily Gazette* our epoch-making journey in South America, I little thought that it should ever fall to my lot to tell an even stranger personal experience, one which is unique in all human annals, and must stand out in the records of history as a great peak among the humble foothills which surround it. The event itself will always be marvellous, but the circumstances that we four were together at the time of this extraordinary episode came about in a most natural and, indeed, inevitable fashion. I will explain the events which led up to it as shortly and as clearly as I can, though I am well aware that the fuller the detail upon such a subject the more welcome it will be to the reader.

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It was upon Friday, the twenty-seventh of August—a date for ever memorable in the history of the world—that I went down to the office of my paper and asked for three days' leave of absence from Mr. McArdle, who still presided over our news department. The good old Scotchman shook his head, scratched his dwindling fringe of ruddy fluff, and finally put his reluctance into words.

"I was thinking, Mr. Malone, that we could employ you to advantage these days. I was thinking there was a story that you are the only man that could handle."

"I am sorry," said I. "Of course, if I am needed, there is an end of the matter. But the engagement was important and intimate. If I could be spared——"

"Well, I don't see that you can."

It was bitterly disappointing, but I had to put the best face I could upon it. After all, it was my own fault, for I should have known by this time that a journalist has no right to make plans of his own.

"Then I'll think no more of it," said I, with as much cheerfulness as I could assume. "What was it that you wanted me to do?"

"Well, it was just to interview that deevil of a man down at Rotherfield."

"You don't mean Professor Challenger?"

"Aye, it's just him that I do mean. He ran young Alec Simpson, of the *Courier*, a mile down the high road last week by the collar of his coat and the slack of his breeches. You'll have read of it, likely, in the police report. Our boys would as soon interview a loose alligator in the Zoo. But you could do it, I'm thinking—an old friend like you."

"Why," said I, greatly relieved, "this makes it all easy. It so happens that it was to visit Professor Challenger at Rotherfield that I was asking for leave of absence. The fact is, that it is the anniversary of our main adventure on the plateau three years ago, and he has asked our whole party down to his house to see him and celebrate the occasion."

"Capital!" cried McArdle, rubbing his hands and beaming through his glasses. "Then you will be able to get his opeenions out of him. In any other man I would say it was all moonshine, but the fellow has made good once, and who knows but he may again!"

"Get what out of him?" I asked. "What has he been doing?"

"Haven't you seen his letter on 'Scientific Possibeelities' in to-day's *Times?*"

"No."

McArdle dived down and picked a copy from the floor.

"Read it aloud," said he, indicating a column with his finger. "I'd be glad to hear it again, for I am not sure now that I have the man's meaning clear in my head."

This was the letter which I read to the news editor of the *Gazette*:—

"SCIENTIFIC POSSIBILITIES.

"SIR,—I have read with amusement, not wholly unmixed with some less complimentary emotion, the complacent and wholly fatuous letter of James Wilson MacPhail, which has lately appeared in your columns upon the subject of the blurring of Frauenhofer's lines in the spectra both of the planets and of the fixed stars. He dismisses the matter as of no significance. To a wider intelligence it may well seem of very great possible importance—so great as to involve the ultimate welfare of every man, woman, and child upon this planet. I can hardly hope, by the use of scientific language, to convey any sense of my meaning to those ineffectual people who gather their ideas from the columns of a daily newspaper. I will endeavour, therefore, to condescend to their limitations, and to indicate the situation by the use of a homely analogy which will be within the limits of the intelligence of your readers."

"Man, he's a wonder—a living wonder!" said McArdle, shaking his head reflectively. "He'd put up the feathers of a sucking-dove and set up a riot in a Quakers' meeting. No wonder he has made London too hot for him. Well, let's have the analogy."

"We will suppose," I read, "that a small bundle of connected corks was launched in a sluggish current upon a voyage across the Atlantic. The corks drift slowly on from day to day with the same conditions all round them. If the corks were sentient we could imagine that they would consider these conditions to be permanent and assured. But we, with our superior knowledge, know that many things might happen to surprise the corks. They might possibly float up against a ship, or a sleeping whale, or become tangled in seaweed. In any case, their voyage would probably end by their being thrown up on the rocky coast of Labrador. But what could they know of all this while they drifted so gently day by day in what they thought was a limitless and homogeneous ocean?

"Your readers will possibly comprehend that the Atlantic, in this parable, stands for

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"HE RAN YOUNG ALEC SIMPSON, OF THE 'COURIER,' A MILE DOWN THE ROAD."

the mighty ocean of ether through which we drift, and that the bunch of corks represents the little and obscure planetary system to which we belong. A third-rate sun, with its ragtag and bobtail of insignificant satellites, we float under the same daily conditions towards some unknown end, some squalid catastrophe which will overwhelm us at the ultimate confines of space, where we are swept over an etheric Niagara, or dashed upon some unthinkable Labrador. I see no room here for the shallow and ignorant optimism of your correspondent, Mr. James

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Wilson MacPhail, but many reasons why we should watch with a very close and interested attention every indication of change in those cosmic surroundings upon which our own ultimate fate may depend."

"Man, he'd have made a grand meenister," said McArdle. "It just booms like an organ. Let's get down to what it is that's troubling him."

"The general blurring and shifting of Frauenhofer's lines of the spectrum point, in my opinion, to a widespread cosmic change of a subtle and singular character. Light from a planet is the reflected light of the sun. Light from a star is a self-produced light. But the spectra both from planets and stars have, in this instance, all undergone the same change. Is it, then, a change in those planets and stars? To me such an idea is inconceivable. What common change could simultaneously come upon them all? Is it a change in our own atmosphere? It is possible, but in the highest degree improbable, since we see no signs of it around us. What, then, is the third possibility? That it may be a change in the conducting medium, in that infinitely fine ether which extends from star to star and pervades the whole universe. Deep in that ocean we are floating upon a slow current. Might that current not drift us into belts of ether which are novel and have properties of which we have never conceived? There is a change somewhere. This cosmic disturbance of the spectrum proves it. It may be a good change. It may be an evil one. It may be a neutral one. We do not know. Shallow observers may treat the matter as one which can be disregarded, but the deeper intelligence of the true philosopher will understand that the possibilities of the universe are incalculable and that the wisest man is he who holds himself ready for the unexpected. To take an obvious example, who would undertake to say that the mysterious and universal outbreak of illness which is recorded in your columns this very morning as having broken out among the indigenous races of Sumatra has no connection with some cosmic change to which they may respond more quickly than the more complex peoples of Europe? I throw out the idea for what it is worth. To assert it is, in the present stage, as unprofitable as to deny it, but it is an unimaginative numskull who is too dense to perceive that it is well within the bounds of scientific possibility.—Yours faithfully,

"GEORGE EDWARD CHALLENGER.

"The Briars, Rotherfield."

"It's a fine, steemulating letter," said McArdle, thoughtfully, fitting a cigarette into the long glass tube which he used as a holder. "What's your opeenion of it, Mr. Malone?"

I had to confess my total and humiliating ignorance of the subject at issue. What, for example, were Frauenhofer's lines? McArdle had just been studying the matter with the aid of our tame scientist at the office, and he picked from his desk two of those many-coloured spectral bands which bear a general resemblance to the hat-ribbons of some young and ambitious cricket club. He pointed out to me that there were certain black lines which formed cross-bars upon the series of brilliant colours extending from the red at one end, through gradations of orange, yellow, green, blue, and indigo, to the violet at the other.

"Those dark bands are Frauenhofer's lines," said he. "The colours are just light itself. Every light, if you can split it up with a prism, gives the same colours. They tell us nothing. It is the lines that count, because they vary according to what it may be that produces the light. It is these lines that have been blurred instead of clear this last week, and all the astronomers have been quarrelling over the reason. Here's a photograph of the blurred lines for our issue to-morrow. The public have taken no interest in the matter up to now, but this letter of Challenger's in the *Times* will make them wake up, I'm thinking."

"And this about Sumatra?"

"Well, it's a long cry from a blurred line in a spectrum to a sick nigger in Sumatra. And yet the chiel has shown us once before that he knows what he's talking about. There is some queer illness down yonder, and to-day there's a cable just come in from Singapore that the lighthouses are all dark in the Straits of Sunda, and two ships on the beach in consequence. Anyhow, it's good enough for you to interview Challenger upon. If you get anything definite, let us have a column by Monday."

I was coming out from the news editor's room, turning over my new mission in my mind, when I heard my name called from the waiting-room below. It was a telegraph-boy with a wire which had been forwarded from my lodgings at Streatham. The message was from the very man we had been discussing, and ran thus:—

"Malone, 17, Hill Street, Streatham.—Bring oxygen.—CHALLENGER."

"Bring oxygen!" The Professor, as I remembered him, had an elephantine sense of humour capable of the most clumsy and

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unwieldy gambollings. Was this one of those jokes which used to reduce him to uproarious laughter, when his eyes would disappear, and he was all gaping mouth and wagging beard, supremely indifferent to the gravity of all around him? I turned the words over, but could make nothing even remotely jocose out of them. Then surely it was an order—though a very strange one. He was the last man in the world whose deliberate order I should care to disobey. Possibly some chemical experiment was afoot; possibly—— Well, it was no business of mine to speculate upon why he wanted it. I must get it. There was nearly an hour before I should catch the train at Victoria. I took a taxi, and having ascertained the address from the telephone book, I made for the Oxygen Tube Supply Company in Oxford Street.

As I alighted on the pavement at my destination, two youths emerged from the door of the establishment carrying an iron cylinder, which, with some trouble, they hoisted into a waiting motor-car. An elderly man was at their heels scolding and directing in a creaky, sardonic voice. He turned towards me. There was no mistaking those austere features and that goatee beard. It was my old cross-grained companion, Professor Summerlee.

"What!" he cried. "Have *you* had one of these preposterous telegrams for oxygen?"

I exhibited it.

"Well, well! I have had one, too, and, as you see, very much against the grain, I have acted upon it. Our good friend is as exacting as ever. The need could not have been so urgent that he must desert the usual means of supply and encroach upon the time of those who are really busier than himself. Why could he not order it direct?"

I could only suggest that he probably needed it at once.

"Or thought he did, which is quite another matter. But it is superfluous now for you to purchase any, since I have this considerable supply."

"Still, for some reason he seems to wish that I should bring some, too. It will be safer to do exactly what he tells me."

Accordingly, in spite of many grumbles and remonstrances from Summerlee, I ordered an additional tube, which was placed with the other in his motor-car, for he had offered me a lift to Victoria.

I turned away to pay off my taxi, the driver of which was very cantankerous and abusive over his fare. As I came back to Professor Summerlee, he was having a furious altercation with the men who had carried down the oxygen, his little white goat's beard jerking with indignation. One of the fellows called him, I remember, "a silly old bleached cockatoo," which so enraged his chauffeur that he bounded out of his seat to take the part of his insulted master, and it was all we could do to prevent a riot in the street.

These little things may seem trivial to relate, and passed as mere incidents at the time. It is only now, as I look back, that I see their relation to the whole story which I have to unfold.

The chauffeur must, as it seemed to me, have been a novice or else have lost his nerve in this disturbance, for he drove vilely on the way to the station. Twice we nearly had collisions with other equally erratic vehicles, and I remember remarking to Summerlee that the standard of driving in London had very much declined. Once we brushed the very edge of a great crowd which was watching a fight at the corner of the Mall. The people, who were much excited, raised cries of anger at the clumsy driving, and one fellow sprang upon the step and waved a stick above our heads. I pushed him off, but we were glad when we had got clear of them and safe out of the park. These little events, coming one after the other, left me very jangled in my nerves, and I could see from my companion's petulant manner that his own patience did not improve with the years.

But our good humour was restored when we saw Lord John Roxton waiting for us upon the platform, his tall, thin figure clad in a yellow tweed shooting-suit. His keen face, with those unforgettable eyes, so fierce and yet so humorous, flushed with pleasure at the sight of us. His ruddy hair was shot with grey, and the furrows upon his brow had been cut a little deeper by Time's chisel, but in all else he was the Lord John who had been our good comrade in the past. He roared with amusement when he saw the oxygen cylinders upon the porter's trolly behind us.

"So you've got them, too!" he cried. "Mine is in the van. Whatever can the old dear be after?"

"Have you seen his letter in the *Times?*" I asked.

"What was it?"

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Summerlee, harshly.

"Well, it's at the bottom of this oxygen business, or I am mistaken." said I.

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Summerlee again, with quite unnecessary violence.

We had all got into a first-class smoker,

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"WE NEARLY HAD COLLISIONS WITH OTHER EQUALLY ERRATIC VEHICLES."

and he had already lit the short and charred old briar pipe which seemed to singe the end of his long, aggressive nose.

"Friend Challenger is a clever man," said he, with great vehemence. "No one can deny it. It's a fool that denies it. Look at his hat. There's a sixty-ounce brain inside it—a big engine, running smooth, and turning out clean work. Show me the engine-house and I'll tell you the size of the engine. But he is a born charlatan—you've heard me tell him so to his face—a born charlatan, with a kind of dramatic trick of jumping into the limelight. Things are quiet, so friend Challenger sees a chance to set the public talking about him. You don't imagine that he seriously believes all this nonsense about a change in the ether and a danger to the human race? Was ever such a cock-and-bull story in this life?"

He sat like an old white raven, croaking and shaking with sardonic laughter.

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A wave of anger passed through me as I listened to Summerlee. It was disgraceful that he should speak thus of the leader who had been the source of all our fame and given us such an experience as no men have ever enjoyed. I had opened my mouth to utter some hot retort, when Lord John got before me.

"You had a scrap once before with old man Challenger," said he, sternly, "and you were down and out inside ten seconds. It seems to me, Professor Summerlee, he's beyond your class, and the best you can do with him is to leave him alone."

"Besides," said I, "he has been a good friend to every one of us. Whatever his faults may be, I don't believe he ever speaks evil of his comrades behind their backs."

"Well said, young fellah my lad," said Lord John Roxton. Then, with a kindly smile, he slapped Professor Summerlee upon his shoulder. "Come, Herr Professor, we're not going to quarrel at this time of day. We've seen too much together. But keep off the grass when you get near Challenger, for this young fellah and I have a bit of a weakness for the old dear."

But Summerlee was in no humour for compromise. His face was screwed up in rigid disapproval, and thick curls of angry smoke rolled up from his pipe.

"As to you, Lord John Roxton," he creaked, "your opinion upon a matter of science is of as much value in my eyes as my views upon a new type of shot-gun would be in yours. I have my own judgment, sir, and I use it in my own way. Because it has misled me once, is that any reason why I should accept without criticism anything, however far-fetched, which this man may care to put forward? Are we to have a Pope of science, with infallible decrees laid down *ex cathedra*, and accepted without question by the faithful? I tell you, sir, that I have a brain of my own, and that I should feel myself to be a snob and a slave if I did not use it. If it pleases you to believe this rigmarole about ether and Frauenhofer's lines upon the spectrum, do so by all means, but do not ask one who is older and wiser than yourself to share in your folly. Is it not evident that if the ether were affected to the degree which he maintains, and if it were obnoxious to human health, the result of it would already be apparent upon ourselves?" Here he laughed with uproarious triumph over his own argument. "Yes, sir, we should already be very far from our normal selves, and instead of sitting quietly discussing scientific problems in a railway train we should be showing actual symptoms of the poison which was working within us. Where do we see any signs of this poisonous cosmic disturbance?"

I felt more and more angry. There was something very irritating and aggressive in Summerlee's demeanour.

"I think that if you knew more about the facts you might be less positive in your opinion," said I.

Summerlee took his pipe from his mouth and fixed me with a stony stare.

"Pray what do you mean, sir, by that somewhat impertinent observation?"

"I mean that when I was leaving the office the news editor told me that a telegram had come in confirming the general illness of the Sumatra natives, and adding that the lights had not been lit in the Straits of Sunda."

"Really, there should be some limits to human folly!" cried Summerlee, in a positive fury. "Is it possible that you do not realize that ether, if for a moment we adopt Challenger's preposterous supposition, is a universal substance which is the same here as at the other side of the world? Do you for an instant suppose that there is an English ether and a Sumatran ether? Perhaps you imagine that the ether of Kent is in some way superior to the ether of Surrey, through which this train is now bearing us. There really are no bounds to the credulity and ignorance of the average layman. Is it conceivable that the ether in Sumatra should be so deadly as to cause total insensibility at the very time when the ether here has had no appreciable effect upon us whatever? Personally, I can truly say that I never felt better in my life."

"That may be. I don't profess to be a scientific man," said I, "though I have heard somewhere that the science of one generation is usually the fallacy of the next. But it does not take much common sense to see that as we seem to know so little about ether it might be affected by some local conditions in various parts of the world, and might show an effect over there which would only develop later with us."

"With 'might' and 'may' you can prove anything," cried Summerlee. "Pigs may fly. Yes, sir, pigs *may* fly—but they don't. It is not worth arguing with you. Challenger has filled you with his nonsense and you are both incapable of reason. I had as soon lay arguments before those railway cushions."

"I must say, Professor Summerlee, that your manners do not seem to have improved

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since I last had the pleasure of meeting you," said Lord John, severely.

"You lordlings are not accustomed to hear the truth," Summerlee answered, with a bitter smile. "It comes as a bit of a shock, does it not, when someone makes you realize that your title leaves you none the less a very ignorant man?"

"Upon my word, sir," said Lord John, very stern and rigid, "if you were a younger man you would not dare to speak to me in so offensive a fashion."

Summerlee thrust out his chin, with its little wagging tuft of goatee beard.

"I would have you know, sir, that, young or old, there has never been a time in my life when I was afraid to speak my mind to an ignorant coxcomb—yes, sir, an ignorant coxcomb, if you had as many titles as slaves could invent and fools could adopt."

For a moment Lord John's eyes blazed, and then, with a tremendous effort, he mastered his anger and leaned back in his seat with arms folded and a bitter smile upon his face. To me all this was dreadful and deplorable. Like a wave, the memory of the past swept over me, the good comradeship, the happy, adventurous days—all that we had suffered and worked for and won. That it should have come to this—to insults and abuse! Suddenly I was sobbing—sobbing in loud, gulping, uncontrollable sobs which refused to be concealed. My companions looked at me in surprise. I covered my face with my hands.

"It's all right," said I. "Only—only it *is* such a sad pity!"

"You're ill, young fellah, that's what's amiss with you," said Lord John. "I thought you were queer from the first."

"Your habits, sir, have not mended since I saw you last," said Summerlee, shaking his head. "I also observed your strange manner the moment we met. You need not waste your sympathy, Lord John. These tears are alcoholic. The man has been drinking. By the way, Lord John, I called you a coxcomb just now, which was, perhaps, unduly severe. But the word reminds me of a small accomplishment, trivial but amusing, which I used to possess. You know me as the austere man of science. Can you believe that I once had a well-deserved reputation in several nurseries as a farmyard imitator? Would it amuse you to hear me crow like a cock?"

"No, sir," said Lord John, who was still greatly offended; "it would *not* amuse me."

"My imitation of the clucking hen who had just laid an egg was also considered rather above the average. Might I venture?"

"No, sir, no—certainly not."

But, in spite of the earnest prohibition, Professor Summerlee laid down his pipe and for the rest of our journey he entertained—or failed to entertain—us by a succession of bird and animal cries which seemed so absurd that my tears were suddenly changed into boisterous laughter, which must have become quite hysterical as I sat opposite this grave Professor and saw him—or rather heard him—in the character of the uproarious rooster or the puppy whose tail had been trodden upon. Once Lord John passed across his newspaper, upon the margin of which he had written in pencil, "Poor devil! Mad as a hatter." No doubt it was very eccentric, and yet the performance struck me as extraordinarily clever and amusing.

Whilst this was going on Lord John leaned forward and told me some interminable story about a buffalo and an Indian rajah, which seemed to me to have neither beginning nor end. Professor Summerlee had just begun to chirrup like a canary, and Lord John to get to the climax of his story, when the train drew up at Jarvis Brook, which had been given us as the station for Rotherfield.

And there was Challenger to meet us. His appearance was glorious. Not all the turkey-cocks in creation could match the slow, high-stepping dignity with which he paraded his own railway station, and the benignant smile of condescension with which he regarded everybody around him. If he had changed in anything since the days of old, it was that his points had become accentuated. The huge head and great sweep of forehead, with its plastered lock of black hair, seemed even greater than before. His black beard poured forward in a more impressive cascade, and his clear grey eyes, with their insolent and sardonic eyelids, were even more masterful than of yore.

He gave me the amused hand-shake and encouraging smile which the head master bestows upon the small boy, and, having greeted the others and helped to collect their bags and their cylinders of oxygen, he stowed us and them away in a large motor-car which was driven by the same impassive Austin, the man of few words, whom I had seen in the character of butler upon the occasion of my first eventful visit to the Professor. Our journey led us up a winding hill through beautiful country. I sat in front with the chauffeur, but behind me my three comrades seemed to me to be all talking together.

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"FOR THE REST OF OUR JOURNEY HE ENTERTAINED—OR FAILED TO ENTERTAIN—US BY A SUCCESSION OF BIRD AND ANIMAL CRIES."

Lord John was still struggling with his buffalo story, so far as I could make out, while once again I heard the deep rumble of Challenger and the insistent accents of Summerlee in high and fierce scientific debate. Suddenly Austin slanted his mahogany face towards me without taking his eyes from his steering-wheel.

"I'm under notice," said he.

"Dear me!" said I.

Everything seemed strange to-day. Everyone said queer, unexpected things. It was like a dream.

"It's forty-seven times," said Austin, reflectively.

"When do you go?" I asked, for want of some better observation.

"I don't go," said Austin.

The conversation seemed to have ended there, but presently he came back to it.

"If I was to go, who would look after 'im?" He jerked his head towards his master. "Who would 'e get to serve 'im?"

"Someone else," I suggested, lamely.

"Not 'e. No one would stay a week.

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If I was to go, that 'ouse would run down like a watch with the mainspring out. I'm telling you because you're 'is friend, and you ought to know. If I was to take 'im at 'is word—but there, I wouldn't have the 'eart. 'E and the missus would be like two babes left out in a bundle. I'm just everything. And then 'e goes and gives me notice."

"Why would no one stay?" I asked.

"Well, they wouldn't make allowances, same as I do. 'E's a very clever man, the master—so clever that 'e's clean balmy sometimes. I've seen 'im right off 'is onion, and no error. Well, look what 'e did this morning."

"What did he do?"

Austin bent over to me.

"'E bit the 'ousekeeper," said he, in a hoarse whisper.

"Bit her?"

"Yes, sir. Bit 'er on the leg. I saw 'er with my own eyes whooping and 'opping down the drive."

"Good gracious!"

"So you'd say, sir, if you could see some of the goings-on. 'E don't make friends with the neighbours. There's some of them thinks that when 'e was up among those monsters you wrote about, it was just 'Ome, Sweet 'Ome,' for the master, and 'e was never in fitter company. That's what *they* say. But I've served 'im ten years, and I'm fond of 'im, and, mind you, 'e's a great man, when all's said an' done, and it's an honour to serve 'im. But 'e does try one cruel at times. Now look at that, sir. That ain't what you might call old-fashioned 'ospitality, is it now? Just you read it for yourself."

The car on its lowest speed had ground its way up a steep, curving ascent. At the corner a notice-board peered over a well-clipped hedge. As Austin said, it was not difficult to read, for the words were few and arresting:—

WARNING.

Visitors, Pressmen, and Mendicants are not encouraged.

G. E. CHALLENGER.

"No, it's not what you might call 'earty," said Austin, shaking his head and glancing up at the deplorable placard. "It wouldn't look well in a Christmas-card. I beg your pardon, sir, for I haven't spoke as much as this for many a long year, but to-day my feelings seem to 'ave got the better of me. 'E can sack me till 'e's blue in the face, but I ain't going, and that's flat. I'm 'is man and 'e's my master, and so it will be, I expect, to the end of the chapter."

We had passed between the white posts of a gate and up a curving drive, lined with rhododendron bushes. Beyond stood a low brick house, picked out with white woodwork, very comfortable and pretty. Mrs. Challenger, a small, dainty, smiling figure, stood in the open doorway to welcome us.

"Well, my dear," said Challenger, bustling out of the car, "here are our visitors. It is something new for us to have visitors, is it not? No love lost between us and our neighbours, is there? If they could get rat poison into our baker's cart, I expect it would be there."

"It's dreadful—dreadful!" cried the lady, between laughter and tears. "George is always quarrelling with everyone. We haven't a friend on the country-side."

"It enables me to concentrate my attention upon my incomparable wife," said Challenger, passing his short, thick arm round her waist. Picture a gorilla and a gazelle, and you have the pair of them. "Come, come, these gentlemen are tired from a journey, and luncheon should be ready. Has Sarah returned?"

The lady shook her head ruefully, and the Professor laughed loudly and stroked his beard in his masterful fashion.

"Austin," he cried, "when you have put up the car you will kindly help your mistress to lay the lunch. Now, gentlemen, will you please step into my study, for there are one or two very urgent things which I am anxious to say to you."

CHAPTER II.

THE TIDE OF DEATH.

As we crossed the hall the telephone-bell rang, and we were the involuntary auditors of Professor Challenger's end of the ensuing dialogue. I say "we," but no one within a hundred yards could have failed to hear the booming of that monstrous voice, which reverberated through the house. His answers lingered in my mind.

"Yes, yes, of course, it is I. . . . Yes, certainly, *the* Professor Challenger, the famous Professor, who else? . . . Of course, every word of it, otherwise I should not have written it. . . . I shouldn't be surprised. . . . There is every indication of it. . . . Within a day or so at the furthest. . . . Well, I can't

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help that, can I? . . . Very unpleasant, no doubt, but I rather fancy it will affect more important people than you. There is no use whining about it. . . . No, I couldn't possibly. You must take your chance. . . . That's enough, sir. I have something more important to do than to listen to such twaddle."

He shut off with a crash and led us upstairs into a large, airy apartment which formed his study. On the great mahogany desk seven or eight unopened telegrams were lying.

"Really," he said, as he gathered them up, "it would save my correspondents' money if I had a telegraphic address. Possibly 'Noah, Rotherfield,' would be the most appropriate."

As usual when he made an obscure joke, he leaned against the desk and bellowed in a paroxysm of laughter, his hands shaking so that he could hardly open the envelopes.

"Noah! Noah!" he gasped, with a face of beetroot, while Lord John and I smiled in sympathy, and Summerlee, like a dyspeptic goat, wagged his head in sardonic disagreement. Finally Challenger began to open his telegrams, and the three of us stood in the bow window and occupied ourselves in admiring the magnificent view.

It was certainly worth looking at. The road in its gentle curves had really brought us to a considerable elevation—seven hundred feet, as we afterwards discovered. Challenger's house was on the very edge of the hill, and from its southern face, in which was the study window, one looked across the vast stretch of the weald to where the gentle curves of the South Downs formed an undulating horizon. In a cleft of the hills a haze of smoke marked the position of Lewes. Immediately at our feet there lay a rolling plain of heather, with the long, vivid green stretches of the Crowborough golf course, all dotted with the players. A little to the south, through an opening in the woods, we could see a section of the main line from London to Brighton. In the immediate foreground, under our very noses, was a small enclosed yard, in which stood the car which had brought us from the station.

An ejaculation from Challenger caused us to turn. He had read his telegrams and had arranged them in a little methodical pile upon his desk. His broad, rugged face, or as much of it as was visible over the matted beard, was still deeply flushed, and he seemed to be under the influence of some strong excitement.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "this is indeed an interesting reunion, and it takes place under extraordinary—I may say unprecedented—circumstances. May I ask if you have observed anything upon your journey from town?"

"The only thing which I observed," said Summerlee, with a sour smile, "was that our young friend here has not improved in his manners during the years that have passed. I am sorry to state that I have had to seriously complain of his conduct in the train, and I should be wanting in frankness if I did not say that it has left a most unpleasant impression in my mind."

"Well, well, we all get a bit prosy sometimes," said Lord John. "The young fellah meant no harm. After all, he's an International, so if he takes half an hour to describe a game of football he has more right to do it than most folk."

"Half an hour to describe a game!" I cried, indignantly. "Why, it was you that took half an hour with some long story about a buffalo. Professor Summerlee will be my witness."

"I can hardly judge which of you was the most utterly wearisome," said Summerlee. "I declare to you, Challenger, that I never wish to hear of football or of buffaloes so long as I live."

"I have never said one word to-day about football," I protested.

Lord John gave a shrill whistle, and Summerlee shook his head sadly.

"So early in the day, too," said he. "It is indeed deplorable. As I sat there in sad but thoughtful silence——"

"In silence!" cried Lord John. "Why, you were doin' a music-hall turn of imitations all the way—more like a runaway gramophone than a man."

Summerlee drew himself up in bitter protest.

"You are pleased to be facetious, Lord John," said he, with a face of vinegar.

"Why, dash it all, this is clear madness," cried Lord John. "Each of us seems to know what the others did and none of us knows what he did himself. Let's put it all together from the first. We got into a first-class smoker, that's clear, ain't it? Then we began to quarrel over friend Challenger's letter in the *Times*."

"Oh, you did, did you?" rumbled our host, his eyelids beginning to droop.

"You said, Summerlee, that there was no possible truth in his contention."

"Dear me!" said Challenger, puffing out his chest and stroking his beard. "No

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possible truth! I seem to have heard the words before. And may I ask with what arguments the great and famous Professor Summerlee proceeded to demolish the humble individual who had ventured to express an opinion upon a matter of scientific possibility? Perhaps before he exterminates that unfortunate nonentity he will condescend to give some reasons for the adverse views which he has formed."

He bowed and shrugged and spread his open hands as he spoke with his elaborate and elephantine sarcasm.

"The reason was simple enough," said the dogged Summerlee. "I contended that, if the ether surrounding the earth was so toxic in one quarter that it produced dangerous symptoms, it was hardly likely that we three in the railway carriage should be entirely unaffected."

The explanation only brought uproarious merriment from Challenger. He laughed until everything in the room seemed to rattle and quiver.

"Our worthy Summerlee is, not for the first time, somewhat out of touch with the facts of the situation," said he at last, mopping his brow. "Now, gentlemen, I cannot make my point better than by detailing to you what I have myself done this morning. You will the more easily condone any mental aberration upon your own part when you realize that even I have had moments when my balance has been disturbed. We have had for some years in this household a housekeeper—one Sarah, with whose second name I have never attempted to burden my memory. She is a woman of a severe and forbidding aspect, prim and demure in her bearing, very impassive in her nature, and never known within our experience to show signs of any emotion. As I sat alone at my breakfast—Mrs. Challenger keeps her room of a morning—it suddenly entered my head that it would be entertaining and instructive to see whether I could find any limits to this woman's imperturbability. I devised a simple but effective experiment. Having upset a small vase of flowers which stood in the centre of the cloth, I rang the bell and slipped under the table. She entered, and, seeing the room empty, imagined that I had withdrawn to the study. As I had expected, she approached and leaned over the table to replace the vase. I had a vision of a cotton stocking and an elastic-sided boot. Protruding my head, I sank my teeth into the calf of her leg. The experiment was successful beyond belief. For some moments she stood paralyzed, staring down at my head. Then with a shriek she tore herself free and rushed from the room. I pursued her with some thoughts of an explanation, but she flew down the drive, and some minutes afterwards I was able to pick her out with my field-glasses travelling very rapidly in a south-westerly direction. I tell you the anecdote for what it is worth. Is it illuminative? Has it conveyed



"SHE FLEW DOWN THE DRIVE."

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anything to your minds? What do *you* think of it, Lord John?"

Lord John shook his head gravely.

"You'll be gettin' into serious trouble some of these days if you don't get a brake on," said he.

"Perhaps you have some observation to make, Summerlee?"

"Drop all work instantly and take three months in a German watering-place," said he.

"Profound! profound!" cried Challenger. "Now, Mr. Malone, is it possible that wisdom may come from you where your seniors have so signally failed?"

And it did. I say it with all modesty, but it did. Of course, it all seems obvious enough to you who know what occurred, but it was not so very clear when everything was new. But it came on me suddenly with the full force of conviction.

"Poison!" I cried.

Then, even as I said the word, my mind flashed back over the whole morning's experiences, past Lord John with his buffalo, past my own hysterical tears, past the outrageous conduct of Professor Summerlee, to the queer happenings in London, the row in the park, the driving of the chauffeur, the quarrel at the oxygen warehouse. Everything fitted suddenly into its place.

"Of course," I cried again. "It is poison. We are all poisoned."

"Exactly," said Challenger, rubbing his hands; "we are all poisoned. Our planet has swum into the poison belt of ether, and is now flying through it at the rate of some millions of miles a minute. Our young friend has expressed the cause of all our troubles in a single word, 'Poison.'"

We looked at each other in silence. No comment seemed to meet the situation.

"There is a mental inhibition by which such symptoms can be checked and controlled," said Challenger. "I cannot expect to find it developed in all of you to the same point which it has reached in me, for I suppose that the strength of our different mental processes bears some proportion to each other. But no doubt it is appreciable even in our young friend here. After the little outburst of high spirits which so alarmed my domestic I sat down and reasoned with myself. I put it to myself that I had never before felt impelled to bite any of my household. The impulse had then been an abnormal one. In an instant I perceived the truth. My pulse upon examination was ten beats above the usual, and my reflexes were increased. I called upon my higher and saner self, the real G. E. C., seated serene and impregnable behind all mere molecular disturbance. I summoned him, I say, to watch the foolish mental tricks which the poison would play. I found that I was indeed the master. I could recognize and control a disordered mind. It was a remarkable exhibition of the victory of mind over matter, for it was a victory over that form of matter which is most intimately connected with mind. I might almost say that mind was at fault, and that personality controlled it. Thus, when my wife came downstairs and I was impelled to slip behind the door and alarm her by some wild cry as she entered, I was able to stifle the impulse and to greet her with dignity and restraint. Later, when I descended to order the car and found Austin bending over it absorbed in repairs, I controlled my open hand even after I had lifted it, and refrained from giving him an experience which would possibly have caused him to follow in the steps of the housekeeper. On the contrary, I touched him on the shoulder and ordered the car to be at the door in time to meet your train. At the present instant I am most forcibly tempted to take Professor Summerlee by that silly beard of his, and to shake his head violently backwards and forwards. And yet, as you see, I am perfectly restrained. Let me commend my example to you."

"I'll look out for that buffalo," said Lord John.

"And I for the football match."

"It may be that you are right, Challenger," said Summerlee, in a chastened voice. "I am willing to admit that my turn of mind is critical rather than constructive, and that I am not a ready convert to any new theory, especially when it happens to be so unusual and fantastic as this one. However, as I cast my mind back over the events of the morning, and as I reconsider the conduct of my companions, I find it easy to believe that some poison of an exciting kind was responsible for their symptoms."

Challenger slapped his colleague upon the shoulder. "We progress," said he. "Decidedly we progress."

"And pray, sir," asked Summerlee, humbly, "what is the present outlook?"

"With your permission I will say a few words upon that subject." He seated himself upon his desk, his short, stumpy legs swinging in front of him. "We are assisting at a tremendous and awful function. It is, in my opinion, the end of the world."

(*To be continued.*)

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Things Seen and Not Seen by the Referee.

By H. THOMPSON
(Southern League Referee).

Illustrated by Chas. Grave.

A REFEREE in a football match sees and hears many things. He must take particular notice of everything he sees, and absolutely no notice of almost everything he hears. Yet referee-baiting is not quite the popular sport it is represented to be by comic artists, and for my part I always say to myself, "Well, it amuses them and it does not hurt me," when the wild men of the football world shout nasty things regarding my eyesight, my ability, my impartiality, and even my ancestry. I take this sort of thing as all in the day's work, let it pass at that, and am very grateful for the crumbs of humour thrown at me occasionally by a football crowd in a critical mood. Once an excited individual roared, "Can't yer see a foul unless it's got feathers on, ref.?" I think if a player had said that I should have sent him off the field, and reported him as a football criminal of the deepest dye, who ought to be suspended for the rest of his life.

But players do say funny things sometimes. "Holy Moses! Did ye see that trip?" cried a dashing Irish forward, during a hot mix-up in the goal-mouth. I had seen nothing, so the game went on. After the match the Irish lad, one of the best the Green Isle ever bred, tackled me quietly and seriously about what he really thought was a glaring infringement. He may have been right—a referee cannot see everything—and, not wishing to argue the point, I evaded it—rather neatly, as I thought—by saying, "My name is not Holy Moses, who was, if you remember, the gentleman you asked for a decision." Like a shot came the reply, "'Tis right ye are, bedad; an' 'tis as little ye know about football as the same Moses did when he was aslape in the bulrushes."

After this, I have no more to write about things I have heard in connection with my refereeing, and will keep my remarks strictly within the limits defined by the title of this article. The position of a referee enables him to enjoy a peculiar view of the game. He does not get the general and extended survey which falls to the happy lot of the favoured spectator in a good seat, but his proximity to the players in action shows him many beautiful, deft touches which must be witnessed at close quarters to be appreciated as they deserve.



"HOLY MOSES! DID YE SEE THAT TRIP?"

He also sees the other side of the shield—the breaking (wilfully, seldom—unintentionally, often) of the many and diverse laws laid down for the proper government of football. In connection with the latter there is much he does not see—in a Copenhagen sense, of course. Take a goalkeeper, for example. The strict letter of the law only allows him two steps with the ball in his hands. But suppose that when in possession of the ball

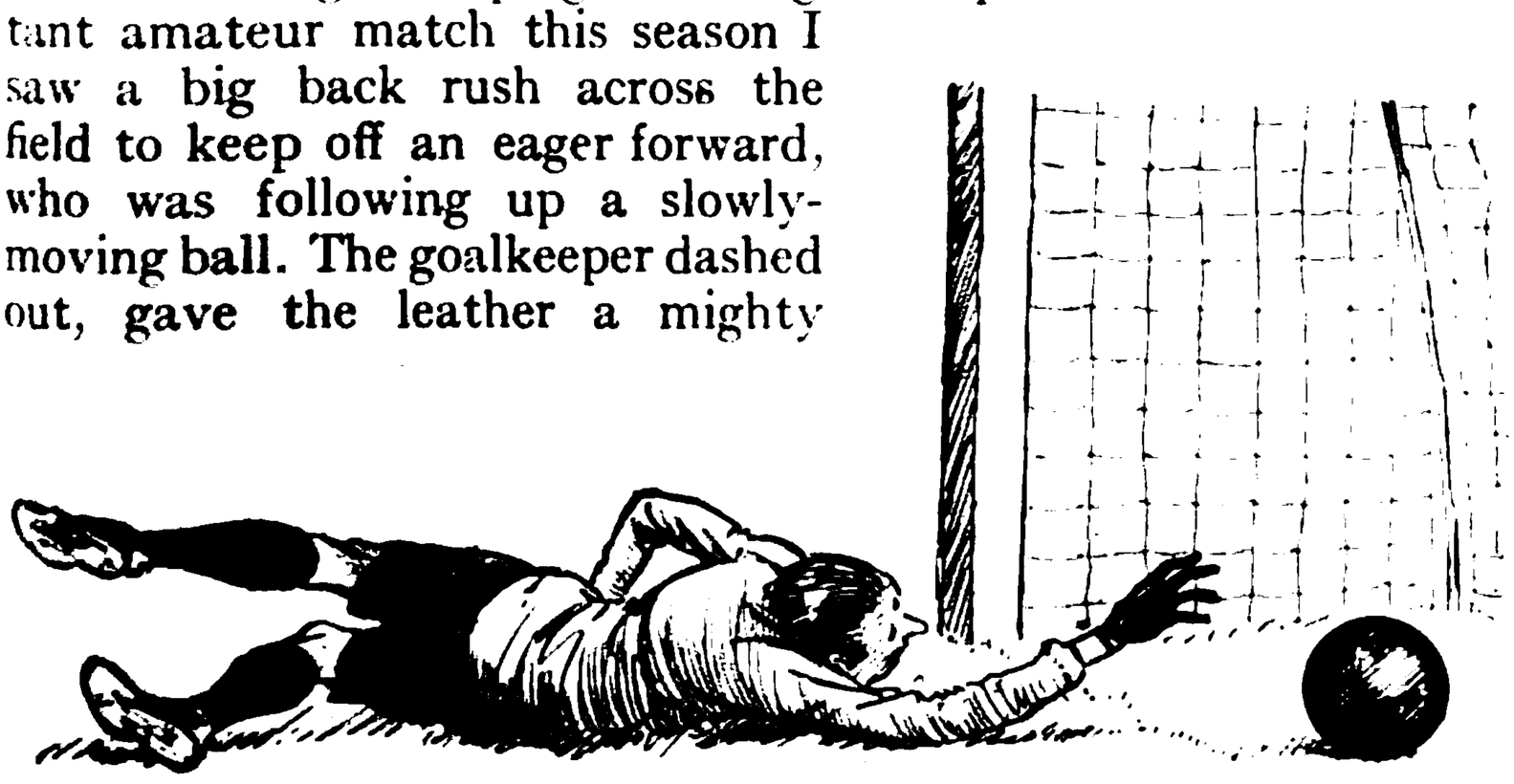
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"HE IS CHARGED AND KNOCKED THREE OR FOUR STEPS."

he is charged and knocked three or four steps—what then? Surely there is nothing for it except the unseeing eye? Again, some custodians are so quick in their movements that unless you are right on the man it is often a physical impossibility for a referee to be certain whether or not a third step has been taken; he can only give the player the benefit of the doubt.

The work of a goalkeeper is hard enough, without the referee coming down at all heavily on the man. Very clever it is, too, especially when the goalie is a master of the art of placing himself in anticipation of a shot in just the one place where a forward has the absolute minimum of goal-space to shoot at. I have seen a quaint thing or two in connection with goalkeeping. During an important amateur match this season I saw a big back rush across the field to keep off an eager forward, who was following up a slowly-moving ball. The goalkeeper dashed out, gave the leather a mighty kick, and sent it bang in the nape of the neck of his own man. The ball spun back without a great deal of pace on it, and it was funny to see the strenuous efforts the goalie made to struggle home in time to effect a save. But the ball beat him by inches only, and a goal was scored while the unfortunate back was turning round and round in dazed fashion, wondering what had hit him.



"THE BALL BEAT HIM BY INCHES ONLY."

I once saw a goalkeeper in a similar condition, in an important League fixture, too. A forward got his foot to the ball with terrific force about a dozen yards from goal, and so quick was the shot that the goalkeeper, trained man as he was, simply had no time even to raise his hands to save his face. The ball struck him fair between the eyes and spun almost straight up in the air for a good twenty yards, to drop eventually just behind the goal. After which, I may add, the game was stopped for slight repairs to the goalkeeper, who, when he came to, vowed he "would never head any more out like that."



"THE BACK WAS TURNING ROUND IN DAZED FASHION, WONDERING WHAT HAD HIT HIM."

Watching the backs gives the referee plenty to do. Their position usually has its bearing on the possibilities of an infringement of the offside rule, and it is also very pretty to see them at work, especially when a really great pair of backs like the famous brothers Walters are on the field. Fearless and fair tackling, clean and clever kicking, admirable judgment in placing the ball at the feet of their own forwards, and mutual support and co-operation—these are qualities I often have the pleasure of seeing when a really capable pair of

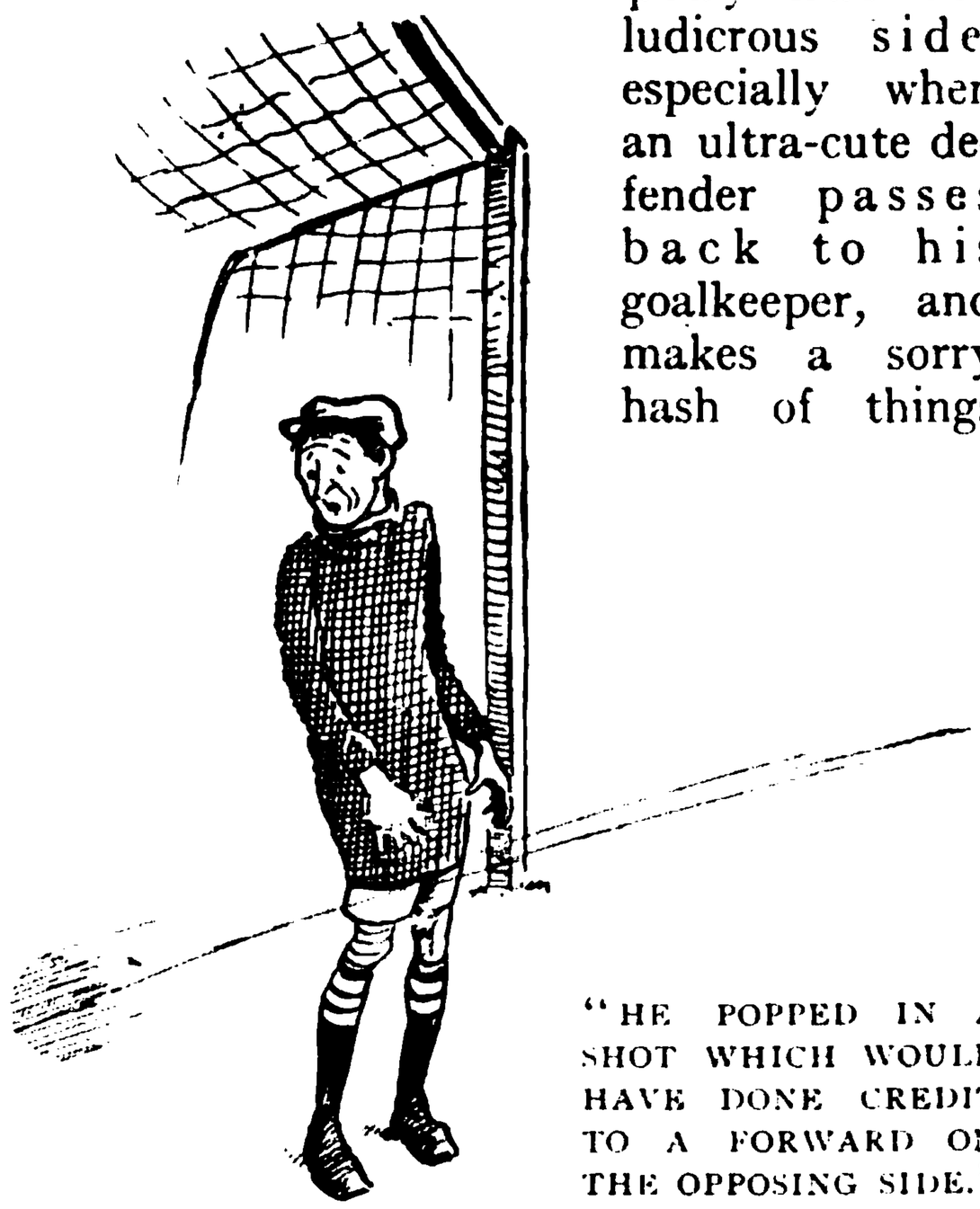
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backs are striving with might and main to save their side. A good back becomes a second goalkeeper on occasion, and there



"THE BALL STRUCK HIM FAIR BETWEEN THE EYES."

is surely no more thrilling moment on a football field than when a dropping or bouncing ball is sailing under the cross-bar, and a back, with a splendid running jump, clears with a flying overhead kick. Back play has its ludicrous side, especially when an ultra-cute defender passes back to his goalkeeper, and makes a sorry hash of things



"HE POPPED IN A SHOT WHICH WOULD HAVE DONE CREDIT TO A FORWARD ON THE OPPOSING SIDE."

by popping in a shot which would have done credit to a forward on the opposing side. I suppose, however, that a hard-pressed back may be expected to do weird things, and I certainly remember one case where a defender in a tight corner made a decided impression on a man's face with the sole of his boot, and yet was really the injured party, strictly according to the rules of the game.

It happened like this. The ball was bobbing and bouncing about in the goal-mouth in that thrilling style which makes spectators rise in their seats and sets the goalkeeper jumping all over the place, when a back, a tall chap, shaped for a high kick at the ball. A minute fraction of time after the back had fixed his eye on the ball and begun to swing his foot for the effort a rival forward, a shortish man, darted forward to gain impetus for a leap which he hoped would enable him to head



"THE BACK'S FOOT AND THE FORWARD'S HEAD CAME IN CONTACT WITH THE LEATHER IN PERFECT UNISON, AND SO DID THE SOLE OF THE BACK'S BOOT WITH THE FACE OF THE FORWARD."



the ball into the net. It looked all like a case of whichever got there first either saving or putting on a certain goal, but it so happened that they both arrived together. As near as I could judge—and I was very close at the moment—the back's foot and the forward's head came in contact with the leather in perfect unison, and so did the sole of the back's boot with the face of the forward. Down went the bold attacker like the proverbial log, and as soon as he was fit to resume play I threw the ball down. According to the strict letter of the law, I could have given a free kick against him, for he was guilty of "dangerous" play if ever a

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man was, and there is nothing in the rules to prevent a referee from penalizing a man whose methods are a danger to himself. If, however, that back had started his kick when the forward was well on his way towards the ball, the case would have been altogether different, and I should have awarded a free kick without a moment's hesitation, to say nothing of the by no means remote possibility of ordering the offender off the field.

From this it must not be hastily inferred that I am in favour of pulling a man up for vigorous and energetic methods, always provided his play is as clean as it is strenuous. Football is no game for those incapable of giving and taking hard knocks as part of the sport, and if a back uses his weight and strength fairly—well, that is what he is there for. But the sly trip, the vicious jab with the elbow at close quarters, and that dirty and deliberate tap on the ankle which paralyzes an opponent and may lame him for a season — these are the things which make my whistle toot and move my tongue to a sharp "caution," which means "marching orders" next time. Happily, these offences are rare, and are diminishing with a gratifying rapidity which points to their complete extinction at no distant date. Players, public, and football legislators side with the referee in sternly suppressing these shady practices, and nowadays a player who is known to have a weakness for foul play is sure to be dropped from any decent team, no matter what his general football ability may be.



"THE LIGHT FORWARD SIMPLY BOUNCED OFF THE BIG BACK."

So far, so good. But it is a big mistake to emasculate the game in the vain endeavour to cope with the low dodges of those who do not mean to play it, who take the field with the set purpose of doing anything they think the referee will not see, and which enables them to gain an advantage.

It is impossible to legislate effectively against this type, and by attempting too much in this direction there is considerable danger of spoiling the game. Honest charging never hurt football, and never will, and it is quite possible for any amount of it to be done without the least tendency to foul play. I should think there never was more straightforward charging seen in any match than there was in the first Army *v.* Navy game at Queen's Club, when the late King Edward and the then Prince of Wales were present. It was a sight for gods and men to see the way Jack and Tommy banged into each other with right good will; but never a man was hurt, and the referee had a very easy time. Charging, even if heavy, is not without its touch of incidental humour. I was once refereeing a match where there was a difference of some three or four stone in weight between a particularly nippy forward and a back who was certainly not afraid to use his weight fairly, to say the least of it. The pair met several times, but always with the same result—the light forward simply bounced off the big back and went to earth with more celerity than comfort. But he came up smiling every time, and never shirked a charge or showed the least resentment until I blew the whistle for "time." Afterwards, however, in the dressing-room, he turned to the hefty back and said, with the same unvarying smile, "I say, old chap, you don't happen to belong to the legal profession, do you?"

Intention is the determining factor between football which is straight but hard-fought and football which is dirty and dangerous. If I see a man's eyes looking unutterable things, and his lips quivering with the unspoken intention of "getting his own back," then that player becomes the object of my most special attention, and is brought up sharp at the least sign of infringement. I do see everything a man does when he is in that mood, but I do not see the little technical faults which have no real bearing on the progress of any particular game and are obviously unintentional. Suppose, for example, that a thrusting and forceful half-back is beset by a pair of clever wingers, who are tapping the ball to each other and adroitly avoiding tackle after tackle. Then something goes wrong with the tip-tap business, and the half and the forwards are mixed up in a hot tussle for the ball. The half gets in his kick, and as he does so happens to touch one of his opponents with **out-**

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stretched hand, in circumstances which show that his action was a perfectly natural one, due to the body pose essential to get the ball away. A technical infringement, no doubt, but not seen by referees who know their business.

If, on the contrary, the man uses his hands to push off an opponent, or to play a kind of leap-frog to get his head to the ball, then the whistle must sound. But not otherwise, as my view of the matter is that the public does not pay its money to hear me oblige with a whistling solo, but wants to see the game, and nothing but the game. Players, too, are not interested in my lung power. They want to play football—not keep stopping in response to the ever-ready whistle of a referee who undoubtedly has splendid eyes to see, but no blind side for use when the spirit of the game demands a transient exhibition of masterly inactivity.



"A KIND OF LEAP-FROG."

It is often a very nice question whether or not the whistle should sound, especially as there are ways and means of doing fair things unfairly on the football field. This contradiction needs a little explaining, but the point becomes only too clear when one forward is the outstanding star-artiste of a team—the mainspring of combination and the greatest scoring force on his side. Such a player is known and marked, and receives particular attention from the defenders against him. He must expect this, but when the "attention" takes the form of two or three men charging at him simultaneously and systematically, it may be within the letter of the law, but it is most decidedly not the game. In such circumstances I interpret the rule referring to "violent" or "dangerous" play in its broadest sense, but the unfortunate part of it is that the whistle may sound after the mischief has been done. Indeed, the great footballer may be next to knocked out of the match without the referee having the faintest excuse to blow his whistle.

But, all the same, such conduct, organized and deliberate, is dead against that unwritten law of British fair play which is the salt of every description of manly sport, and if persisted in will tend to degrade a grand game to the level of a gladiatorial spectacle. It is so needless, too, as the opposing star can always be dimmed quite fairly. The manner in which Needham baulked Bloomer in an historic Cup final is a case in point. That magnificent half simply followed Bloomer all over the field like his shadow. He never left him, no matter where the ball went, and the result was that whenever the leather came near Bloomer there was Needham on the spot to worry his man, which he did most effectively. But it was all clean and honest, and may fairly be quoted as extraordinary but perfectly permissible and justifiable football tactics devised to meet the needs of a special case.



"TWO OR THREE MEN CHARGING AT HIM SIMULTANEOUSLY."

The many variations of the offside rule give the referee plenty to observe and act upon, and no department of the game is more fruitful in opportunities for vehement criticism from the crowd. Here, however, the referee has very little on which to exercise his discretionary powers. If a man is offside, that ends the matter, and the influence of

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accident on the fact, so important in other infringements, is not to be considered. I should like to shatter one very common delusion regarding the offside rule, which is that simply because a man is in an offside position the game must be stopped. But to be offside in effect a man must act; he cannot be passively offside. The rule says that when offside a man shall not "play the ball or in any way interfere with the play or an opponent," and to me it seems quite plain that until he does so he has been guilty of no offence.

Personally, if I was a keen supporter of a team, I should like to see the opposing forwards take up offside positions as much as they pleased, simply because they are out of the game until they are brought onside by a change in position. There are other nice points in the offside rule—points far to ocomplicated to interest my readers. Even experts differ widely on certain aspects of the offside rule, and the only final and comprehensive verdict I ever heard concerning it was that supplied by a keen partisan, who said: "Offside—yes, I know all about it. That's what's always given against our team."



"THE REFEREE DOES NOT SEE THE BALL WHICH HITS HIM SOMEWHERE IN THE BACK."

Among other things which the referee does not see is the ball which hits him somewhere in the back, occasionally with more force than is compatible with his dignified control of the game at the moment. This sort of thing has happened to me more than once, and, although I have never been able to see anything desperately funny in it, yet I can vouch that as a comic turn it is by far the greatest success seen on a football field. Yet why should even the minor misfortunes of a football referee excite nothing more human than the appreciative laughter of the multitude? I suppose it is because the crowd regards a referee as a species of autocrat who is humanized when his dignity is upset by a flying ball. This may be true of a referee here and there, but most of them take a far different view of their duties and position. My idea of refereeing is not that I am the man who must be obeyed; I keep that phase of my position in the background, and take my whistle in hand with the idea of seeing sport and actively assisting twenty-two other sportsmen by just giving them a friendly "toot-toot!" when, by mere chance, they happen to infringe one of the many laws without which football would degenerate into a meaningless scramble.



"A FRIENDLY 'TOOT-TOOT!'"

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The East a-Callin'.

By ARTHUR MORRISON.

Illustrated by Charles Crombie.

I.

SIR HUDSON BAGG'S title was brand-new, and his country house was so newly occupied and recently furnished and freshly painted and lately aired that it seemed brand-new also, although it had stood in the same place for two hundred years. But the deeds of conveyance were as new as the house looked, and Sir Hudson Bagg and Lady Bagg were strangers in the county, though desperately anxious to remain so no more; for Lady Bagg already, in her mind's eye, saw the Baggs pre-eminent among the county families. At present, however, calls were strangely few and tardy, so that expedients were necessary, and Sir Hudson and Lady Bagg became patrons of the Philanthropic Society for Harassing the Indigent. That alone, of course, was not enough; it was merely a step. The next was to take so active an interest in the society that it became advisable to organize a great meeting and conversazione in furtherance of its principles, to which everybody desirable in the county and out of it was invited, and for which Sir Hudson Bagg very kindly allowed the use of the Hall and grounds, where he and Lady Bagg were "at home" to all distinguished Harassers of the Indigent, and speeches and tea and resolutions and a garden-party took their parts in the confusion.

The success was glorious. The Philanthropic Harassers were a society of very high patronage, and for some while Lady Bagg even dared to indulge a hope that a minor Royalty might be netted. This failed to "come off," but the company was nevertheless sufficiently numerous and distinguished to constitute a triumph for the house of Bagg, and the first of many. So much, therefore, for Sir Hudson and Lady Bagg, who merely provide the house and grounds for this story, as they did for the Philanthropic Society for Harassing the Indigent.

The day was fine, and a large crowd of people brightened the grounds. At least, some of them did, but a great proportion were a very serious-looking lot indeed. Bishops dotted the landscape, deans punctuated the lawns; one or two countesses were visible, and a duchess very nearly came, but not quite. The less distinguished Harassers pointed out the more distinguished to each other, and the more distinguished exhibited themselves with great affability. There were several quite respectable politicians, and three Labour members came in strange mixtures of clothes which had cost hours of thinking out, to express their unutterable independence.

"Why," said one visitor to another, indicating a clerically-attired figure in the distance, "I do believe that's Aubrey Fitzmaurice!"

"No, is it?" replied his friend. "I haven't seen him since he buried himself in the East-end—not since he left Oxford, in fact. Mightn't have recognized him in those things."

The first speaker turned to a second friend and repeated his remark.

"Why, so I believe it is!" answered this third observer. "Who'd have expected to see him here? I thought he didn't believe in this sort of thing. I'll go over and speak to him presently."

Each of these three pointed out the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice to somebody else, for he was a man of celebrity among East-end parsons, and many tales were told of his whole-souled devotion to his work. A man of brilliant gifts, notable connections, and some private fortune, he had married a wife of like mind with himself, and had gone to live altogether in one of the worst of the East-end parishes, cutting himself off entirely from his old acquaintance, and giving his whole time and faculties for the bettering of the people in his parish. He lived with them and liked them, it was said, and gathered the worst of them about him in a club, where he

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met them on equal terms, playing billiards with them, boxing with them, and sharing as much of their lives as they would allow. It was so great a change for this exquisite of Balliol in particular that he was noted and talked of above the generality of them that laboured east of Aldgate, though he displayed himself less than any, and had vanished wholly from his earlier world.

"That," said a lady in the crowd, who had just been told, "is Aubrey Fitzmaurice, who married Clara Tyrwhitt and hid her and himself in some parish in the East-end. They've made quite a mania of it. Nobody's seen her since the wedding."

"Is that the man?" replied the other. "Why, Clara Tyrwhitt was my greatest chum at school, and I haven't seen her for years. I *must* ask about her. Does anybody know him?"

"I believe his aunt's coming presently—Lady Bilbury. And there's Clara's cousin Mary right across the lawn. We'll speak to her."

Meanwhile, Mr. Harry Benyon, who had not seen the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice since he left Oxford, strolled across with his two friends and accosted the exile.

"Why, Aubrey, old chap!" said Harry Benyon. "I hardly knew you!"

"Wotcheer!" replied the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice, looking up quickly and continuing his walk. "Cheer-oh!"



"YOU REMEMBER HARRY BENYON, SURELY?"

"Why, I don't believe you know *me*," answered Benyon, following and offering his hand. "You remember Harry Benyon, surely?"

"What-ho! Don't I rather!" responded the reverend gentleman, shaking hands vigorously. "Good ol' 'Arry! An' 'ow's yerself?"

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"First-rate, thanks. But, I say, you *are* East-end, you know!"

"What d'*you* think? Right in it! I'm one o' the nuts down 'Oxton!"

"I'm sure you are. But do you keep it up always?"

"Keep it up? Not 'arf! Always keep it up. I'm a-thinkin' out a sermon now."

Benyon and his friends looked at each other blankly, and then at the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice.

"Well," said one, "if you deliver 'em like that I'd like to come and hear one."

"Right-o, ol' cockalorum! Come whenever you like. Any old sinner's welcome; an' bring a bob for the whack round. We don't often get a toff."

"We'll all come," said Benyon, "and all bring our bobs for the—the what-d'ye-call-it. But now just you forget that sermon and the East-end for a bit and be yourself again. This function's going to be dull—we'll keep together."

"Garn—cheese it, 'Arry!" replied the Reverend Mr. Fitzmaurice. "What price my sermon? I got to think it over, I tell ye. See ye later on, matey."

The reverend gentleman sheered off to a quieter part and left the three friends somewhat perplexed.

"They told me he'd gone East-end mad," remarked Benyon, "and by Jove he has! Who'd have dreamed he'd have played it as low as that—he, of all men? Making oneself popular in the parish is all very well, but—hang it all!"

"There may be something in it," observed one of the others. "I've heard they're very suspicious of strange ways down there, and the Oxford manner they won't stand at any price."

"But, my dear chap——"

"Oh, of course I know he's got it pretty rank, but it's only more extreme than some of the others. Some of them do all sorts of wild things and play it most amazin' low to catch the fancy of the East-enders. There was even a bishop——"

"Oh, yes, we know about that; but Aubrey isn't an advertising bishop, and, more, he was never that sort at all. I believe it's actual mania—I do, positively. He *is* East-end mad, that's plain. But we'll see him again in course of the afternoon."

Meanwhile, the lady who had been Mrs. Fitzmaurice's greatest chum at school and her friend, Miss Cust, had lost sight of Mrs. Fitzmaurice's cousin Mary, but presently found her in another part of the grounds.

Before they could speak of the thing themselves she said: "Do you know, Clara's husband's here somewhere? Harry Benyon's been talking to him. He's gone clean East-end mad, it seems—worse than the Bishop of Limehouse. Talks just like a costermonger. Isn't it quaint? I can't think what aunt will say!"

"Oh, we *must* speak to him," said Miss Cust's friend. "Indeed, we were looking for you to introduce him. I never saw him before; I haven't seen Clara for years."

"I don't know him myself; the engagement was very short, and we were away in Egypt at the time of the wedding. Harry Benyon promised to find him again for me. Harry says he's become quite a curiosity. I hope he won't swear very much!"

At this moment Harry Benyon hove in sight, hauling with him the reluctant Aubrey.

"I tell y' I'm a-thinkin' out a sermon!" he was heard to protest as he approached.

"Here you are—I've found him," said Harry Benyon. "Mr. Aubrey Fitzmaurice—Mrs. Fitzmaurice's cousin Mary, Miss Cust, and Miss Peyton."

"What-oh! 'Ow do?" said the Reverend Aubrey, shaking hands all round. "My ol' pal 'Arry 'ere, 'e *won't* let me think out my sermon, blimy. Still, as it's laidies——"

"We've been longing to see you for ages," said Miss Tyrwhitt. "Tell us all about Clara. Why isn't she here?"

"Washin' day," said the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice.

"*What?* You don't mean to say that poor Clara does her own washing?"

"Lummy, no—not all of it. 'Tain't likely, is it?"

"I shouldn't have thought so. I suppose she does a little, just as a sort of example to the poor women in the parish?"

"Right-o! Got it in once. She does lead the fashions—no kid!"

"Well, you must both be very devoted, I'm sure. And does Clara talk that funny way, too?"

"Talk funny? Rats! No more'n what me an' you do."

"Oh, well! But doesn't she find it very dull?"

"Dull? Blimy, no! I ain't the sort to be dull with. She don't 'ave time to be dull."

"Of course, I suppose there's a lot of visiting?"

"Not 'arf! She goes a-visitin' every day—except washin' day, o' course. An' she 'aves 'er pals in to tea, too, sometimes—'Oxton pals, I mean. Dull? Why, the

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Paragon an' the Britannia's close by, an' a corkin' movin'-picture show just raand the corner—on'y a dee a time!"

"Poor Clara! But there, no doubt she likes it as much as you. I suppose it *is* necessary to be so *very* East-end? I expect you find the people appreciate it?"

"Fair knocks 'em. Me an' the ol' Dutch——"

"Old *what?*"

"Ol' Dutch; the delo elrig, you know—the storm an' strife; the missis, I mean—Clara."

"Clara? Oh, don't call her such things as that!"

"Don't? Well, what would you call 'er? But stow all this—no 'ank, I *must* think out that sermon. So long! See you later."

"But surely you don't think out sermons in places like this! And here comes your aunt; I expect she's looking for you. Lady Bilbury, we've just been introduced to Aubrey, and he's *such* an East-ender!"

Lady Bilbury, stout, imposing, and peering through an ivory-handled lorgnon, came sailing toward the group. The Reverend Aubrey, with an air of resignation, stayed his departure, and then smiled cheerfully as he met Lady Bilbury's gaze and plunged to meet her.



"'WOTCHEER, AUNTIE!' HE CRIED, AND KISSED HER WITH A LOUD SMACK."

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"Wotcheer, auntie!" he cried, and kissed her with a loud smack.

Lady Bilbury, her lorgnon knocked into one eye, choked with fury.

"Go away, Aubrey, you fool!" she gasped. "It's plain you *are* mad, as everybody says. You neglect us all for two years, and then make a disgusting public exhibition of yourself like this! You're not fit to be at large!"

"'Ere, cheese it, auntie!" protested the reverend gentleman, somewhat abashed—for Lady Bilbury could be a very terrible person on occasion. "Draw it mild. Don't go chewin' the rag afore company. I'll do a bunk till your monkey climbs down. Got to think out a sermon. Tooraloo!"

"The creature's mad!" said Lady Bilbury, flushed and indignant, as her nephew's back view vanished in the crowd. "Hopelessly crazy! It's not safe to let him go about!"

"He does certainly seem very strange," observed Miss Tyrwhitt. "He's been saying the most extraordinary things in the most peculiar language. I wonder if it's safe for Clara to be with him?"

"It's the sort of thing some of them do," said one of Benyon's friends, who had joined the party. "Do in Rome as the Romans do, you know, and all that. They call their parishioners 'blokes' and that, and they say it goes down wonderfully. There's the Bishop of Limehouse, now——"

"Oh, of course, we know the Bishop of Limehouse," said Lady Bilbury, smoothing her ruffled plumage; "but he's no excuse for Aubrey, and the Bishop does draw the line somewhere. He doesn't behave like a drunken bargee among his friends. No, it's actual mental derangement, I'm sure, and what I've expected all along. These absurd enthusiasms always lead to something of the sort. Something must be done, and quickly; he mustn't be allowed to go about disgracing his family."

"Shall we wire to Clara?"

"That would scarcely be of much use. This affair would be all over long before she could get here. Besides, we're not sure how Clara might take it. I hate to say it, my dear, but I've a horrid fear she may be almost as bad herself, if it's only from constant association with him. She worshipped him, you know, and we've seen nothing of them for ever so long, since they went so mad over this East-end business. No, the family must interfere, and we must really do something to restrain him among all these people. There will be a perfect scandal. What can we do? We can scarcely ask Sir Hudson Bagg to have him turned out; that would make a scene at once. But we really must do something."

"He keeps saying he wants to think out a sermon," remarked Harry Benyon. "I've heard him say it half-a-dozen times at least—the sort of cranky, persistent thing they're apt to say, you know. I think that's the side to take him on. Get Sir Hudson Bagg to lend him his study to do his sermon, and then lock him in."

"Excellent, Mr. Benyon—a really admirable suggestion. I'll see Sir Hudson Bagg at once." And Lady Bilbury, with recovered dignity, sailed off in search of her host.

Lady Bilbury was one of the great captures of the occasion, and Sir Hudson Bagg, under Lady Bagg's instructions, would gladly have lent her the whole house for a week if she had asked for it. Consequently the mere request of the study for an hour or two was met with alacrity, and the faithful Benyon was dispatched to decoy the Reverend Mr. Fitzmaurice into the toils. The task was easy, for nothing, it seemed, could have pleased the sermon-cogitator better.

"That's a little bit of all right," he observed, gratefully. "I'm gettin' fed up with all this noisy push outside, an' I *must* get on some'ow with that sermon."

He was seen safely into the study, and a trusty servitor of the house was placed just without the study door. And with that Harry Benyon sought Lady Bilbury to report that her reverend nephew was safely withdrawn from public notice.

"It's all right now," he said. "He's put away in the study with a new pen and a pile of foolscap. I found him talking to a newspaper man."

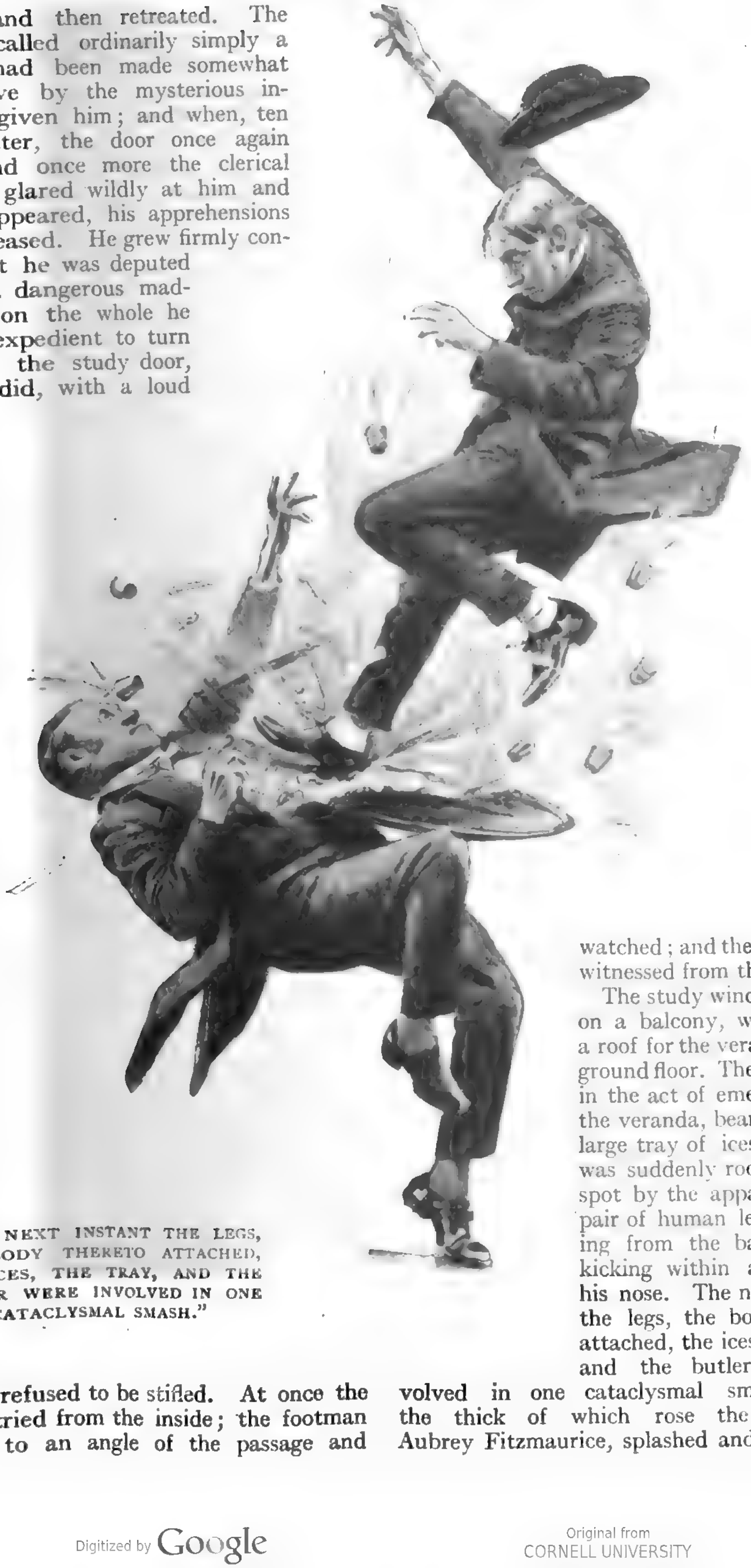
"A newspaper man, Mr. Benyon?" exclaimed Lady Bilbury. "But that will never do. We shall have all his insanities published broadcast—and exaggerated, if that is possible. We must find that newspaper man and forbid him—absolutely forbid him—to print anything about Aubrey. Where is he?"

Harry Benyon knew where the newspaper man had been, but he was not there now, nor anywhere else to be seen. The fact was, he had found the meeting rather dull copy, and, having hit on something much more attractive, had now vanished to write up his little scoop.

Meantime, the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice was somewhat restless in the study, as the trusted servitor in the passage could hear. After a little while he appeared suddenly at the door, stared at the servitor for a

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moment, and then retreated. The servitor — called ordinarily simply a footman — had been made somewhat apprehensive by the mysterious instructions given him; and when, ten minutes later, the door once again opened, and once more the clerical gentleman glared wildly at him and again disappeared, his apprehensions vastly increased. He grew firmly convinced that he was deputed to guard a dangerous madman, and on the whole he judged it expedient to turn the key of the study door, which he did, with a loud click that refused to be stifled. At once the door was tried from the inside; the footman retreated to an angle of the passage and watched; and the sequel was witnessed from the grounds.



"THE NEXT INSTANT THE LEGS, THE BODY THERETO ATTACHED, THE ICES, THE TRAY, AND THE BUTLER WERE INVOLVED IN ONE CATACLYSMAL SMASH."

The study window opened on a balcony, which made a roof for the veranda of the ground floor. The butler was in the act of emerging from the veranda, bearing a very large tray of ices, when he was suddenly rooted to the spot by the apparition of a pair of human legs depending from the balcony and kicking within an inch of his nose. The next instant the legs, the body thereto attached, the ices, the tray, and the butler were involved in one cataclysmal smash, from the thick of which rose the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice, splashed and veined in

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pink and cream, and darted across the lawn for the nearest shrubbery.

"Stop him!" screamed Lady Bilbury, her worst fears realized and doubled.

But nobody made the attempt save one portly dean, who, chancing to be in the line of flight, extended his arms and for one second danced before the fugitive as of yore danced the Bishop of Rum-ti-foo. In the next second the dean had turned three-quarters of a somersault, and the Reverend Mr. Fitzmaurice vanished like a harlequin through an arbutus.

II.

NEXT day's issue of that bright little paper, the *Telephone*, contained a bright little personal article, contributed by the journal's representative at the meeting of the Philanthropic Society for Harassing the Indigent. He had, it appeared, "enjoyed an unusual opportunity of a chat with that fascinating and interesting personality, the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice, whose devoted work among the poor of his East London parish has made his name familiar to all who are interested in the upraising of the masses. Amid a thousand calls of duty the reverend gentleman gladly gave 'arf a mo,' to use his own picturesque expression, to a few remarks on his opinions and experiences. In spite of his high connections and his University education, he has become one of the people, sharing their joys and sorrows, and adopting their simple manners and earnest vocabulary. By dint of continued perseverance he has completely succeeded in eliminating the noxiously undemocratic consonant 'h' from his speech, and he has as carefully assimilated the expressive locutions of the down-trodden toiler. As he himself says, he finds Stepney a fair knock-out, and, although he wears a black 'I'm afloat' and 'round the 'ouses' —playful synonyms for coat and trousers—he is truly right in the push at 'Oxton. Questioned as to the prevalent views as to the localities he loves, the reverend gentleman replied with the pregnant monosyllable, 'Rats!' As for himself and his old Dutch—an affectionate reference to Mrs. Fitzmaurice—residence anywhere else would speedily drive them balmy on the crumpet.

"In regard to the type of pulpit discourse he considered best fitted to his parishioners, Mr. Fitzmaurice expressed no very particular views, beyond a general opinion that the preacher should chuck it off his chest with no hank, and serve it up very O T—or, as you might say, peas in the pot."

Several more paragraphs followed, in which a pleasant picture was drawn, from the Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice's own information, of the devoted vicar traversing his parish in cheerful guise, reproving an acquaintance who seemed elephant's trunk in one place, correcting an unruly parishioner elsewhere with one on the I suppose, and farther along encountering a tragedy that wrung his raspberry tart; all explained as being translatable on the usual principles of rhyming slang. And, finally, the vicar was represented as he tore himself away from his interviewer to prepare an urgently needed sermon. "Don't forget," were the parting words of this remarkable man, accompanied by a cordial shake of the hand. "whenever you're near the vicarage, be sure to knock at the Rory O'More and give us a chyike!"

The Reverend Aubrey Fitzmaurice did not see the *Telephone* that day till he returned to the vicarage from a round of visits in the afternoon. He read the opening lines of the article with some surprise, the rest with a growing sense of gasping stupefaction. He blinked, gazed at the familiar furniture about him, rubbed his eyes, looked at the paper again, and finally groped his way to the door and called for his wife.

"Clara," he said, "do read this article and tell me what in the world it means, or if I'm mad or dreaming."

"Yes, dear," his wife replied. "I didn't know you were in. There are two gentlemen waiting to see you in the drawing-room; they were told to call by Lady Bilbury, they say. They seem to be doctors, and they've been asking the oddest questions about you. And I've had a strange letter from my cousin Mary. She wants to know if you've been home since yesterday, and says she's terribly afraid that your work here has upset your mental balance!"

"Has it? Perhaps it has," replied the distracted vicar. "I shouldn't have believed it till five minutes ago, when I read that paper. Just look at it, Clara, and tell me—do tell me—what it all is. Either I *am* mad or somebody writing there is."

III.

THREE streets away from the vicarage, in the darkest corner of the bar of the Feathers, Snorkey Timms was bitterly reproaching Dido Fox for the failure of an attempt on Sir Hudson Bagg's household valuables.

"I said what it 'ud be," snarled Snorkey. "You an' your Reverend Aubrey! There's bin no 'oldin' you since that parson come

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down here and everybody began callin' you Aubrey. If I'd 'a' done it, like I wanted, it 'ud 'a' bin all right. I wouldn't 'a' bin nobody in particular, 'cept an anonymarious parson in them clothes you've got to pay Ikey Cohen for. I'd 'a' gone in easy enough with all that mob an' made no 'ank, an' got in the place an' done it neat an' quiet. Nobody 'ud 'a' come talkin' to me, an' if they did I wouldn't 'a' give meself away like that. 'Tain't enough to wear a parson's clobber, you idjit!"

"But look what a chance it was," protested Dido—"me lookin' the very livin' spit of 'im when I've 'ad a wash an' a shave."

"Chance? Rats! It's lookin' like the parson that's busted the show. So mighty proud o' yerself an' yer Aubrey, once you got the togs you must go an' dress up in 'em an' fancy yourself, I s'pose! So o' course the first thing somebody thinks 'e knows you, an' o' course the next thing you go a-jawin' up an' down an'—— Why, what's the good o' lookin' like a parson unless you talk like one? That's where I'd 'a' come in. *I'd* 'a' chucked 'em the proper dialogue. I may not look like any partic'ler parson, but I *can* sling orf a few words classy."

"Classy? You? Rats!"

"There you are—'rats' is just what you'd say. You've got no polite savvy yerself, so you bloomin' well can't see mine. That's your ignorance."



"SNORKEY TIMMS WAS BITTERLY REPROACHING DIDO."

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MY REMINISCENCES.

By SIR JOSEPH LYONS.

Drawings by H. M. Brock, R.I.



SIR JOSEPH LYONS.
From a Photograph by Dover Street Studios.

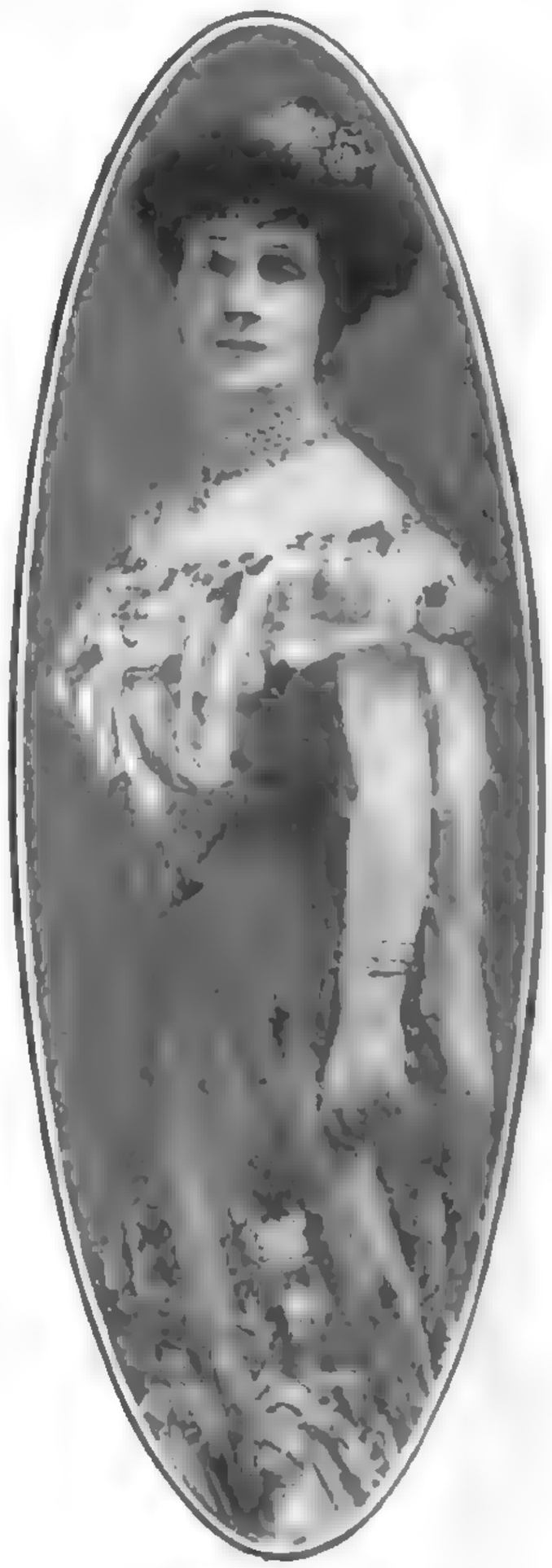
CURIOUSLY enough—for there does not seem any direct connection between the two—my first experience of the serious side of business life, the art of earning bread and butter, was connected with palettes (not palates), for I began my working career as a water-colour artist. All things considered, too, I think I may claim to have made some small strides in this profession, as full early my pictures were exhibited at the Royal Institute, while I was also fortunate enough to find an excellent customer for my work in Sir Spencer Wells.

Shortly afterwards, too, Sir Eardley Wilmot proved a good patron to me, and really, as things go in this particular walk of life, I suppose I should have accounted myself fortunate to have obtained such influential recognition so early in my career. True, I was not earning a fortune in any sense of the word, but at least I was executing a sufficient number of commissions to "keep the wolf from the door" by disposing of the fruits of my labour.

Strangely enough, the more success I achieved the more resentful I became. Naturally, from one point of view, I felt extremely gratified at finding a customer, but that one point of view was utterly subservient to another—the feeling that my own pet thoughts, my own pet ideas, the fruits of weeks of work, the cherished creations of my brain, would have to leave me, never to return.

But one day, when I was seriously considering whether my artistic feelings, as I regarded them, would stand the strain of being continually parted for ever from their sister sentiments, the creations of my brain, fate, opportunity, chance—call it what you will—decided that I should turn any small talents I may have possessed into another direction. This strange happening occurred, curiously enough, amid most unromantic and inartistic surroundings—to be brief, in a rather unsavoury, none too cleanly, most unfashionable London eating-house.

It chanced that, to satisfy the inner man, one morning in the 'eighties I strolled into a dirty — to me, repellent — little London restaurant. These unappetizing establishments were almost invariably small, being limited in the capacities for cooking and serving of the



LADY LYONS.
From a Photograph by Dover St. Studios.

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THE LAND OF MOUNTAIN AND STREAM.
By Sir Joseph Lyons.

man and his wife, with, perhaps, one or two waiters. They were also almost invariably dark, stuffy little places, often infested with cockroaches; and as for their kitchens, they were things liable to cause nightmares—anyway, I prefer not to tell of them. The City clerk who wanted a snack had to pay fourpence for a cup of coffee or tea, a penny tip, and a penny or twopence for a bun. It goes without saying that these charges were beyond his slender means; result, he adjourned to the nearest bar and had a glass of beer.

Well, on the occasion to which I refer I entered the said "restaurant," ordered the least uninviting dish I could hit upon, and turned things over in my mind during the unconscionably long time I had to wait for the arrival of my repast. I had often enough before this reflected how great fortunes had been made by the discovery of some simple universal want waiting to be supplied. In a flash it came to me that I had discovered just such a simple unsupplied universal want — clean and decent fare in bright and congenial surroundings at a reasonable price.

And there and then was laid the foundation-stone of a business which now feeds about two million of the inhabitants of London, and which on every working day in the year caters for over five hundred thousand men, women, and children—a business, too, which finds work for nearly sixteen thousand employés, which possesses two hundred and fifty branches (the number is steadily increasing, both in London and the provinces), and which has no fewer than hundred and twenty thousand agents throughout the country selling our "wares." Yes, in a small way—and I write it with due humility—a chance visit of a discontented artist to a dirty restaurant has exercised a considerable influence, indeed, over the lives of a very



A SCENE IN THE HIGHLANDS.
By Sir Joseph Lyons.

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large section of men, women, and children in Great Britain.

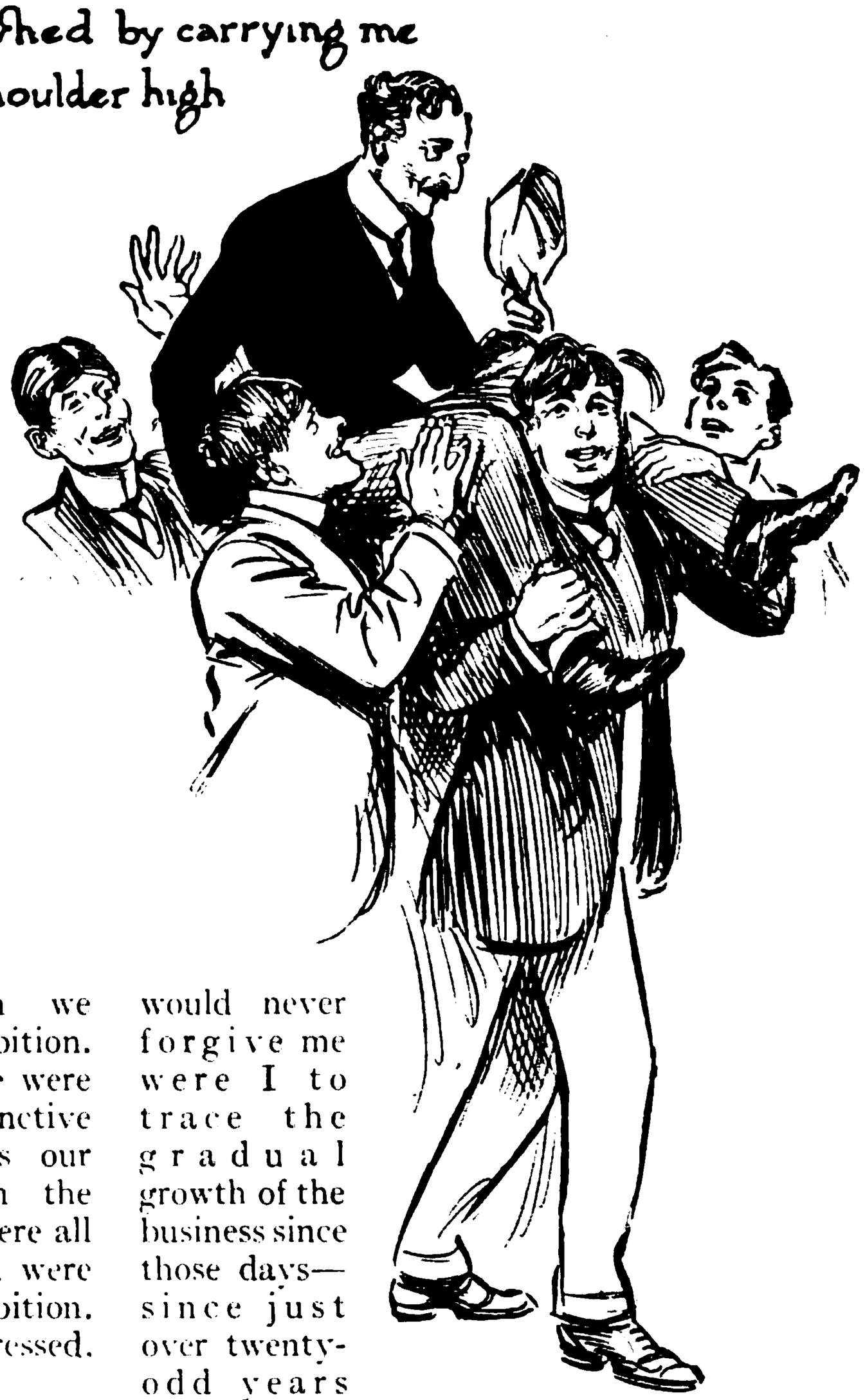
Anyway, since that day "we" have changed the conditions of feeding the public. I write "we," because it was at this time that I entered into partnership with Mr. Montague Gluckstein, who, in my opinion, is one of the cleverest organizers in the kingdom, and we have worked together ever since.

A positive revolution has taken place in the habits of our people. The twopenny cup of tea and no tips, ditto, ditto, ditto coffee, has done wonders. But we never forget that man does not live by bread alone. Brightness and light, music and flowers, civility and cleanliness—all these are indispensable elements in the building up of our business.

Our first *coup* was at Newcastle Exhibition. We engaged M. Baroza, the most famous Hungarian violinist of his day—a little, ugly, pock-marked genius, whose every movement was like a poem—and with him we engaged eight other violinists. For that band of first-rate performers we paid a hundred and ten pounds per week during the whole time the exhibition was opened. People said we were mad. We had no earnings save the profit on the twopenny cup. But the refreshment-hall was crowded night after night, as if it had been a gala performance at the opera. We not only got our money back, but made a profit besides.

From the Newcastle Exhibition we "trekked" to the Glasgow Exhibition. There the lessons learned at Newcastle were taken advantage of. But the distinctive feature of the Glasgow success was our waitresses. They were chosen from the bonniest lasses in all Scotland; they were all arrayed in Marie Stuart costume, and were one of the great features of the Exhibition. Pretty girls in attendance, tastefully dressed, civil and attentive.

By the way, on the last night of the Glasgow Exhibition it became known that the medical students of Glasgow and Edinburgh were coming in their thousands to paint the place red. The police came to me about it and offered me whatever protection I thought fit. I promptly refused any. I personally saw the leaders of the students, told them that I relied entirely upon their proper instincts, and got their promise that no harm should be done to my establishment. Then I handed the *café* over to them. They placed their own guards at the doors, admitting only whom they chose, and had a nice old time, finishing by carrying me shoulder-high. The moral is this—that not a single cup or saucer was broken; and our establishment, which was the only one which refused police protection, was the only one in the exhibition where no damage was done.



I am sure readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE would never forgive me were I to trace the gradual growth of the business since those days—since just over twenty-odd years ago I started with one customer. By sheer hard work, and the fact that I (I mean, we) set out to teach people how to feed cheaply and well, that one customer has expanded into many millions. I have often been asked the secret of this successful increase of clients, and it may be of interest, therefore, if I say that I think that the real reason of our

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success can be explained in these two maxims—"Never bite off more than you can chew" (quite an appropriate motto for us!) and "Advertising's a good thing if you're advertising a good thing." We had the "good thing," we advertised the "good thing," the man in the street liked it, found it a "good thing"—and came back again.

It may be of interest if I say that every member of our staff has to work his way up from the bottom. I have, at the present time, over twenty nephews of my own in the service. Every one of these began at the bottom. Let me, in imagination, take you through one of our kitchens. You see those two young cooks, with caps on their heads and the usual white uniform, who are working forty to the dozen? They are my nephews. There is not a superintendent in the whole of our establishment who has not begun life as a waiter.

But a truce to commerce, with its attendant delights and disappointments. Let me turn to less strenuous subjects. Let me, for example, try to tell you about a few of the reflections which are the outcome of an exceedingly arduous career. In the first place, it has been said that we twentieth-centuryites are too prone to indulge to excess in the good things of the table—a charge, alas! for which I have been frequently held largely responsible.

Is this true? I think not. Every age has its fad, and the twentieth century is essentially an age of fads. Almost daily articles appear in the papers discussing the question as to exactly what quantity of food the human frame requires to keep it strong and healthy, while some enterprising experimentalists go so far as to declare that the by no means magnificent sum of fourpence a day is quite large enough to procure nourishing food for even the heaviest of eaters.



SIR JOSEPH LYONS, AS SEEN BY A "VANITY FAIR" CARTOONIST.

Now, I may as well say at once that I am by no means in accord with those who assert that the Englishman is, in these days, prone to over-eating. The question is, I think, not so much one of over-eating as of cooking. The average Englishman of the present day merely insists upon his food being well-cooked and well-served; in times gone by he was not so particular. But to-day he may, I think, be looked upon as a connoisseur where his meals are concerned, and from my experience I can conscientiously say that, as a nation, neither the English, Scotch, Welsh, nor Irish deserve to be called gluttons.

The fact of the matter is that within the last twenty or thirty years a great change has come over the public taste where food is concerned. People have become more Continental in their appetites, and the plain, substantial fare that appealed to their fathers has now but few attractions for a large section of the public.

Moreover, I have a shrewd idea that the man who dines off a plain steak or chop, with vegetables, bread, butter, and cheese, probably actually partakes of more solid food than his more fastidious brother who turns his attention to a five, six, seven, or eight course dinner.

No, so far as the upper and middle classes are concerned, I do not think that the charge of over-eating is a just one. No doubt they spend a good deal more money in restaurants than formerly, but that does not necessarily mean that they

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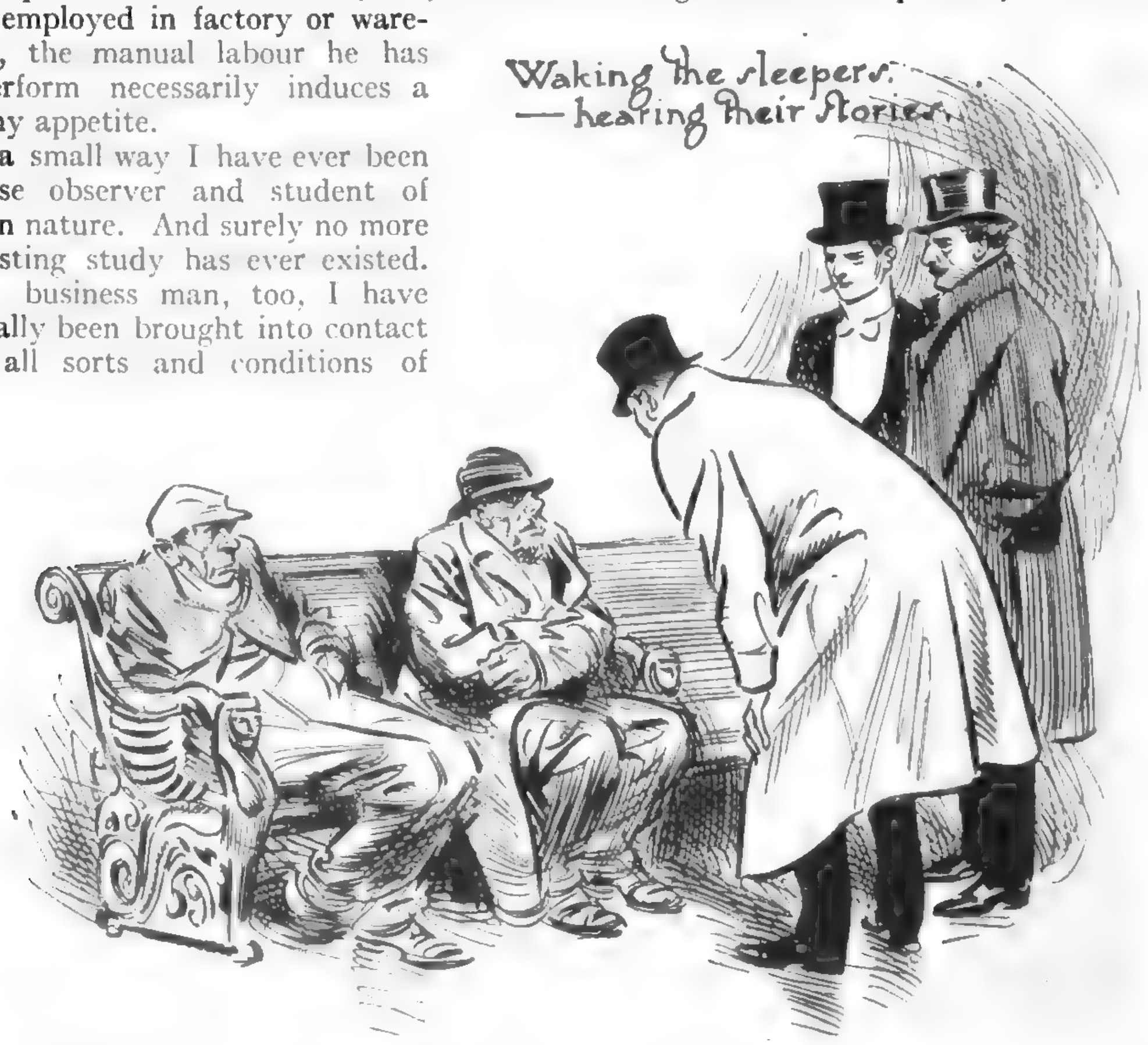
either eat or drink more. The real explanation lies in the fact that the restaurant of the present day can do much more for its customers than the old-fashioned eating-house was able to do.

Then, again, the British workman has recently had the charge of over-eating levelled at him. Now, I can conscientiously say that in his case also, as in the case of the "world of wealth and fashion," this accusation of gluttony is a most unfair one. The British workman—and under this head I include all workers of Great Britain—is, "collectively" speaking, a conscientious, hard-working man. He has perforce to arise betimes, and, whether he is employed in factory or warehouse, the manual labour he has to perform necessarily induces a healthy appetite.

In a small way I have ever been a close observer and student of human nature. And surely no more interesting study has ever existed. As a business man, too, I have naturally been brought into contact with all sorts and conditions of people. One or two stories of actual experience of these said people may, therefore, not be out of place.

I remember some years ago two young Oxford students, who had been dining late, saying that as the hours of closing would compel them to be turned out at 12.30 a.m., they would like to put in another couple of hours and go to some supper club where they could, as they expressed it, "do as they liked—within reasonable bounds, of course," and have the time of their lives. The two undergraduates in question already looked *blasé* in the extreme, and the thought crossed my mind that a peep into another side of life—into a side of life of which they had probably seen next to nothing—would no doubt do them a deal more good than sitting up until the small hours of the morning.

I therefore said to them: "Do you want to have the time of your lives? It will cost you something. Are you willing to spend a couple of pounds a head? I guarantee you will never forget the experience as long as you live. I am willing to put in a similar sum, and so make six pounds for the outing." The young fellows, who had been dining and wining, were rather puzzled, but eventually



agreed to share in the adventure. "First," I said, "we must change our gold into half-crowns." Then, each carrying sixteen half-crowns in our pockets, we sallied forth shortly after midnight.

"Where are you taking us?" they said. I replied that I thought that a short walk to cool their brains would probably do them no particular harm. And thus we wended our way down to the Embankment, where, on a Saturday night, the homeless and destitute, life's outcasts who have nothing else to hope for and nothing else to live for, endeavour to

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find temporary oblivion by making their beds on the cold, hard seats.

Beginning at Westminster, I and my two young Oxford friends walked slowly along the Embankment from seat to seat, waking the sleepers, hearing their stories, and distributing the half-crowns. The students, who were excellent young fellows at heart, soon entered into the spirit of the thing, and not only cheerfully and cheerily distributed their sixteen half-crowns each, but gave away three or four pounds more—all the money they had with them, so that eventually it became necessary for them to walk home to their hotel. I left them at the door, and they both thanked me heartily for being the means of enabling them to get a glimpse at "how the other half of the world lives."

"Well, you know what's what," they said, as they bade me good-night. "We never enjoyed anything so much before." They had had their money's worth in the pleasure they gave to other people. I fancy that visit to the Embankment gave those two youthful merry-makers far more real pleasure than sitting up for six nights and days could possibly have done.

Yes, to the real observer of life—and I hope and think I may number myself in this category—there is a never-ending field for interesting and profitable—morally, at least—observation. Another little story. Not very long ago I was going down Piccadilly when I felt I was being shadowed by someone. I looked round and saw a small boy following me closely and watching me. To ascertain what it was he wanted I turned sharply round upon him. Before I could speak the little nipper said to me: "Ain't you done with it yet, guv'nor? You'll be burning your moustache if you smoke it much longer." "What do you mean, my boy?" said I. "Well," said he, "my father is a cripple at home. He can't afford no tobacco, but, oh! he do love a smoke, and I have been follering you, sir, waiting for you to throw away the end of your cigar." The little nipper was only nine years old, and he had walked the length of Piccadilly with the wistful yearning to obtain the fag-end of a cigar for his crippled father at home.



Another happening in connection with my experiences of the extremes of hunger among the poor stands out very vividly in my memory. Some years ago Mr. George R. Sims proposed to me that I should give away one of the *Referee* cheques, which that journal was at that time presenting to certain of the public who were carrying the paper in various localities. I gladly consented to do so, and selected as the thoroughfare a road leading from Hyde Park Corner through Knightsbridge. The announcement had appeared in the *Referee* to the effect that two guineas would be given to the twentieth person who was found carrying a copy of the newspaper in his hand.

Bent on performing my duties in a thoroughly conscientious manner, I accordingly started out. After some dozen holders of the paper had passed I noticed a man, apparently very much down on his luck, laughing in the cheeriest manner possible as he gazed with hungry eyes into the well-stocked window of a restaurant. The man's laughter was so hearty and full of that real appreciation of the humour of something which invariably prompts genuine laughter that I walked up to him and ventured to ask him whether he would share his joke with

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me, to which he replied, with a merry twinkle in his hungry eye (if ever a man appeared to want a good square meal, I was talking to that man then), "I'm laughing, because I'm mad."

"You don't look mad," I answered.

"That's as it may be," he said; "but I am mad, all the same—as mad as anyone in Bedlam, and that is why I am laughing. And mark you, sir," he added, hastily, "I can prove the truth of my words."

"How can you do that?" I said.

"Just as easily as rolling off a log," he said, with the merry twinkle still in his eye. "All last week I was not able to get a stroke of work to do. In fact, as man to man, I may tell you that I have not slept in a bed for a week, neither have I tasted a bite of food since yesterday. Yesterday was a lucky day for me," he added, as an afterthought, "for I actually found an eatable crust in the gutter; and but very few crusts that one picks up in the gutter are eatable, you know."

"I'm laughing because I am mad"



The man's sense of humour was infectious, but the pathos of the whole thing was too sad for words; so that, for fear of appearing weak, I made no reply.

"Well, now you want to know why I'm mad," continued my friend, for as such I was beginning to regard him. "Well, I'll tell you. Here am I standing before this window. That's plain enough, isn't it? And I'm devilish hungry. And to appease that hunger all I have to do is to break the window and sneak as much food as I can eat. And that's not the only beauty of the whole thing, for if I break the window I should get a night's lodging in the police-station and food and shelter thrown in. But I don't do it. Why don't I do it? Because I'm mad—stark, staring mad!" And the man broke out into another peal of laughter.

"But surely you see that it would be a pity to break the poor man's window," I ventured to remark, "because, after all, he hasn't done you any harm."

"I suppose that's the real reason of my madness," said the man. "Providence helps those who help themselves—I know that well enough; and yet, fool that I am, I'm not helping myself. I must be half-witted, don't you think, sir?" he added, plaintively, as, for the first time during our conversation, the pangs of hunger began to get the better of his sense of humour.

A few minutes later, like a hungry wolf, my friend was enjoying a good meal. All the same, I think it would have made but little difference to him had the meal been of the most indifferent kind.

I think you'll agree with me that the study of human life is often a very, very sad study. Even as I write a Gilbertian idea crosses my mind that the happiest millionaire in London—nay, in the world—would be he, granted the facilities, who would spend some part of his millions in opening restaurants on the Embankment and elsewhere where all and sundry of London's homeless and starving could be provided with food free, gratis, and for nothing.

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Is it easy to educate the public? The question is a particularly interesting one. Personally, as an individual expression of opinion, I think the public is very easily educated, if you go the right way about it. The change, for instance, that has been made in the habits of the London working men in the last twenty years is amazing. It is due to three causes. First, to the Council schools; secondly, to the shortening of the hours of work; thirdly, to the improvements of the feeding of the working classes. Twenty years ago, if you sat opposite any building in process of erection, you would see the children coming up at twelve and one o'clock with their dinner-cans. Their fathers would come out all grimy and dirty, and sit down on the nearest plank and rush through their food, and then spend the rest of the dinner-hour in the nearest public-house.

Now you will find the working man dining in the evening with his family. The "dinner-pail" is no longer brought to him at midday by his children, but he goes to the nearest cheap restaurant, gets a cup of good tea or coffee and some bread-and-cheese, or a snack of something else; then he sits reading the newspaper and talking with his mates until the dinner-hour is over. There has been an enormous improvement in the victualling of the public. Food is better, food is cheaper, cooking is better, and the result is that there is less drinking, and the father and family dine together in the evening.

By the way, I wonder whether the fact that life is one of the greatest paradoxes imaginable has ever crossed your mind? It has crossed mine on many an occasion, and in passing has left behind it a feeling of sadness. I take it that among the majority of workers in this world the salient hope is to make money—lots of money, barrels, tons of money—for few of us are satisfied with a sufficiency. But then, of course, we don't know what a sufficiency of money is.

Within recent years many men and women have come to me and have said: "You must be a very happy man; you have made money out of your business." Was ever cause and effect so greatly misconstrued? To think that money makes happiness is to think as one bereft of reason. All the money in the world would not bring any living soul a step nearer to happiness than would the possession of the fastest racing motor-car bring the earth nearer to the moon. If I have discovered one thing worth the finding in a strenuous life it is that it is "Hope," the longing for what is usually the unattainable, that is the fairy godmother of happiness.

And yet I can remember the day when, like so many others, I fondly believed that a small measure of success in business would make me the happiest man in the world. I know now what a big mistake I made. I was as happy as an ambitious young artist, every whit as happy as I am to-day.

Once upon a time I fancied that, did my means permit, I would become the owner of yachts and other expensive toys. "These luxuries," I thought to myself, "will provide me with hobbies which must make me the happier." Curious, isn't it? My business still remains my baby. Only a few days ago someone said to me: "Suppose you were ten times richer than Rockefeller. What would you do?" The memory of the castles in the air I used to build crossed my mind as I replied: "Cover England with hospitals, the most magnificent hospitals the world has ever seen. That is the first thing I should do." But castles in the air at all times of one's life are futile things, aren't they?

However, enough of my humble hopes and aspirations, doubts and fears. Let me see whether it is not possible that my experience may prove of some real practical value to readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

I am often asked whether I consider that there are as many promising openings in business to-day as there were, say, fifteen or twenty years ago. My reply is: "The twentieth-century business man must be a man of ideas; he must wait until he sees his chance, and then seize it with lightning rapidity." The old, humdrum days of business are, to all intents and purposes, as defunct as our good Queen Anne. Therefore the business man of to-day must remember that if he will "make good", he must possess three qualifications—Concentration, Originality, and Continuity.

To parents who are perplexed as to what to do with their sons I would therefore say: "Bring them up to appreciate the value of ideas; give them that tuition which will help them to become keen, clear-brained business men. If you do this your boys will prove the truth of my contention that there are as many openings in business to-day as ever there were. The openings are not the same—that goes without saying—but they exist all the same."

The watchword of the young man of to-day should be "Anticipation." In that one word lies the secret of success.

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The Guardian of the Left Flank.

By C. BENBOW.

Illustrated by Christopher Clark, R.I.

I.

"SAYONARA."

"Sayonara," replied the old man, and grasped his son's hand. "I am old, and it will not be long to wait. It is well that both my sons shall greet me when I cross over."

The little wrinkled woman with the close-cropped grey head rose from the cushions on which she was seated, and going to her son put both her hands on his shoulders and looked long into his face. He led her gently back to her cushions and made her sit down, then he knelt on one knee and took the brown, wizened face between his hands.

"As the father says, it will not be long to wait, mother. Sayonara."

She tried hard to speak, to smile at him; her bony hands gripped his arms, her whole frame seemed to stiffen in its effort to keep back her pent emotions. Then, in an instant, old age and mother-love had conquered; she raised the ample sleeves of her kimono before her face and fell forward on her cushions, sobbing convulsively.

Captain Osaka rose to his feet and turned to the little girl in the rainbow-silk kimono.

"Sayonara, my beloved."

She, too, came close to him and held his arms and looked tensely into his face. He was a little man, even for a Japanese, and their eyes were level. For a long moment they stood thus. "Sayonara, my lord," she replied at last in a strangled whisper.

She and the old man stood in the doorway and watched the dapper, blue-uniformed figure go down the street, and when Osaka was about to turn the corner and looked round, she waved her hand and cried, "Banzai!"

That was his last glimpse of her, a dainty little figure in rainbow silk, standing in the

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sunny doorway and smiling bravely as she waved to him. None who witnessed this parting would have guessed that to him that smile had been more heartrending than tears, or that the smiling girl in the doorway had a moment later collapsed moaning on the matted floor within.

This was the second parting. Mirami had first said good-bye to her lover when he left for the "front" three weeks after the marriage. She had never expected to see him again, but the gods had been kind, and had sent him back to her. While his wound healed she had prayed feverishly that the war would end before her husband was well enough to go to the front again. By day she had smothered the shrine with flowers, and by night had crept out and made it gay with rushlights and coloured sweetmeats. But it was all in vain, the gods were deaf; perhaps the dread God of War had overawed them.

Osaka's father, the old Samurai, was crippled with rheumatism, yet he hobbled restlessly about the house and garden for the greater part of the afternoon; at last he announced his intention of going down to the quay.

"I go not to see him again," he explained to the two women; "the boy was right when he said that public partings make for weakness; but I would see this wonderful gun of his which is the talk of all Sasebo. This strange thing will I see from the barrier, without entering."

The excuse was a transparent one, for hitherto nothing would induce the old man to go near the quay. He was a warrior of the old school who had fought in armour in his day, and like many of his class he was an irreconcilable. He resented fiercely all modern innovations. The sword had been good enough for him and for his ancestors for countless generations, and now the sword had fallen to second place. Men hid in holes now and killed each other from a great distance with these new-fangled Western weapons. Thus was war robbed of all honour. Where was the glorious sword-fight of old, the lightning-play of the swordsman, the music of steel on steel, the thunder of the stamping feet of ten thousand mailed warriors? It was in vain that Osaka had argued that these methods of warfare would spell annihilation to-day; the old man only became more unreasonable and irritable.

The sight which met the veteran's eyes when he reached the quay filled him with amazement, for he had never before seen a modern steamship at close quarters. What struck him most was the immensity of the thing. The side of the liner towered up from the edge of the quay like a great steel battlement. How huge, too, were the funnels through which the monster seemed to breathe!

But the old man had come to get a last glimpse of his son; he pushed through the crowd which surged against the railings, and at last caught sight of him. He was directing a crowd of men who were swarming round a strange object on the ground. This object appeared to be a gigantic and massive cylinder of steel; in thickness it was almost the height of a man at one end, but it tapered down considerably towards the other. Osaka's father glanced at this quizzically for a moment, then his gaze returned to his son. He watched every movement of the dapper figure. Never for a moment did his keen non-committal eyes leave it, until suddenly it was lost to view, as the crowd of workers sprang apart. His son had shouted the order: "Stand clear!" Next moment there was a tremendous jarring, clanging sound, as the steam-crane lifted the giant howitzer into the air. The gay, kimono-clad crowd around the barriers broke into a roar of "Banzai!" as the monster hung between earth and sky. Never before had such a gun been seen in Sasebo; the hundreds of field-pieces which had been embarked there seemed mere pencils in comparison to it.

Close to the old Samurai a soldier was saying good-bye across the barrier to a smiling little geisha in a cerise and gold kimono. She at the moment was gazing up in awe at the grim object suspended in mid-air.

"Oh, how huge, how wonderfully great is the gun!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, and think how the Rooskis will like the shell which it throws," he replied, smiling.

"Oh, where is the shell?" she asked. "I would love to see the shell; it must indeed be a great ball to fit that huge mouth."

The soldier laughed boisterously. "It is no ball, Musibo," he replied; "it is a great, conical-shaped shell, nearly as tall as you; it weighs five hundred and fifty pounds, and the gun can throw it ten thousand yards—about six miles."

The little maiden looked at him in amazement and gasped.

"Oh, how wonderful! how wonderful!" she exclaimed.

The soldier gave her a grateful smile.

The crane swung its heavy burden round gently until it rested over the hold of the ship, then slowly the thick steel cables began to unwind and the iron monster disappeared

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from view. Once more the shouts of "Banzai!" rent the air.

The old man's gaze fell again to the quay in search of his son. Captain Osaka was now striding up and down not far off, while his junior was collecting and marshalling the gun section.

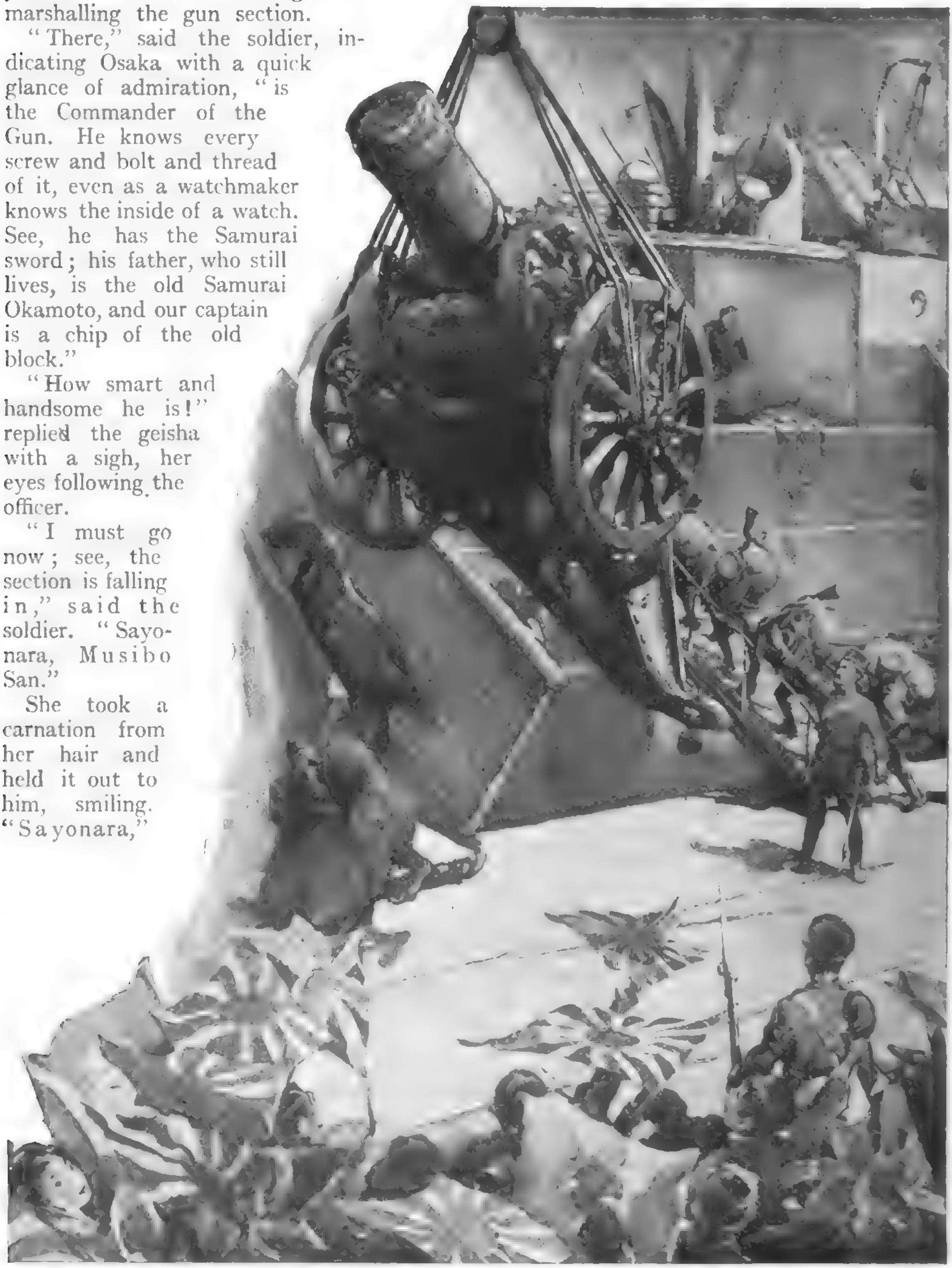
"There," said the soldier, indicating Osaka with a quick glance of admiration, "is the Commander of the Gun. He knows every screw and bolt and thread of it, even as a watchmaker knows the inside of a watch. See, he has the Samurai sword; his father, who still lives, is the old Samurai Okamoto, and our captain is a chip of the old block."

"How smart and handsome he is!" replied the geisha with a sigh, her eyes following the officer.

"I must go now; see, the section is falling in," said the soldier. "Sayonara, Musibo San."

She took a carnation from her hair and held it out to him, smiling. "Sayonara," she replied. "Kill many Rooskis before you return."

He placed the flower inside his cap and said something in an undertone which was evidently complimentary, for the geisha broke



"NEXT MOMENT THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS JARRING, CLANGING SOUND, AS THE STEAM-CRANE LIFTED THE GIANT HOWITZER INTO THE AIR."

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into a merry laugh which expressed, as clearly as if she had spoken it, the exclamation: "O flatterer!"

The soldier, still smiling, saluted, then turned and doubled across the enclosure to where the men of the gun section were falling in.

Soon afterwards Osaka's junior came up to him and reported with a salute that the gun section was "present and correct." The captain acknowledged the salute, then walked briskly to where the section had fallen in. He gave a sharp word of command, and the party marched off and began to ascend the gangway which bridged the space between the quay and the troopship. Captain Osaka stood at the foot of the gangway until all his men had passed up, then he too turned and mounted. At the top he turned again, and stood there for several moments surveying the crowd. His eyes swept up and down the closely-packed barrier as if he half expected to see some familiar face. Perhaps he felt the earnest gaze of the old man whose eyes were riveted upon him. The crowd recognized him as the officer in charge of the gun, and broke again into a roar of "Banzai!" Osaka had not bargained for this: he saluted and disappeared hastily behind the black bulwarks.

Okamoto backed slowly out of the crowd. He felt suddenly very old and very tired; he must get back home and tell them all about it. The words of the soldier and of the geisha kept repeating themselves in his brain: "A chip of the old block, knows every screw and every bolt," and the geisha: "So smart and so handsome." Yes, they would be pleased to hear of this; perhaps he would bring them back to see the last of the ship—it sailed at midnight. Why not? There was no harm in standing behind the barriers.

But when he got back he felt almost too exhausted and generally done up to talk, and while he was telling them about his adventures he fell asleep. When he awoke the sunlight was streaming through the creeper-clad window, and the *Deshima Maru* was far away, steaming northwards through the Inland Sea.

II.

FROM the Chinese farm far out on the plain the landscape looking northwards was a grand and desolate one. Range upon range of snow-clad, conical-peaked mountains. In the deep valleys between the mountains pine-forests nestled, and here and there sparse battalions of pine and fir struggled up the steep slopes towards the rocky summits.

Through the ranges resounded continually the tremendous thunder of big guns, and, as an accompaniment, a faint, persistent, muttering sound, which told of distant rifle-fire. Punctuating this uproar at short and irregular intervals was a peculiar, harsh, peremptory rah-ta-ta-ta-ta-taa—the distinctive stammer of a machine-gun. At times, when several of these sinister weapons were "talking" simultaneously, their clamour lent a strange, defiant note to the din.

All these sounds assailed the ears of the A.D.C. who was standing in the doorway of the farmhouse and looking out towards the ranges.

"Is he coming?" asked a deep voice from within.

The A.D.C. raised the field-glasses which were suspended round his neck by a thin leather strap, and looked at a point where a deep gorge debouched on the plain.

"Not yet, sir," he replied over his shoulder, lowering his glasses. He turned again, lit a cigarette, and resumed his watch.

The sun was far down in the west, and the weak rays reflected by the snow tinged the grim panorama before him with a thousand shades of crimson. The azure shadows which lay in the valleys seemed to deepen by contrast, and in one narrow gorge, screened by a great, conical-shaped peak, they had turned to a wonderful indigo blue.

For several minutes the young staff officer stood there, lost in the beauty of it all; then with a start he pulled himself together and raised his field-glasses again. This time his inspection was rewarded. Galloping towards him over the plain was a single horseman. He focused him carefully through the powerful glasses and saw by the uniform that he was an artillery officer; then he turned and announced, with a salute: "Captain Osaka is coming now, sir."

Osaka entered somewhat breathless after his hard ride. As he saluted the general he noticed that several divisional commanders and brigadiers were present. They, in company with a number of staff officers, were leaning over a large trestle table in the middle of the room. The door leading into the next room was ajar, and through it came a murmur of modulated voices. Glancing in that direction, Osaka caught a glimpse of a row of telephone orderlies seated facing the wall at a long, narrow trestle table. They appeared to be working at high pressure; each had a receiver strapped over his head, the sound-discs covering his ears, and in front of him a telephone instrument.

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An orderly passed continually to and fro between the telephone room and the room in which Osaka stood; each time he entered the latter he handed one of the staff officers a paper which appeared to be a written message. The officer would glance through it quickly, then turn and bend over the table. What he did there Osaka was unable to make out, as the table was almost hidden from view by the officers who stood round it.

Dusk was approaching, and at an order from one of the staff an orderly entered and lit a large acetylene lamp which hung over the centre of the table from a massive, soot-covered beam overhead; the lamp was fitted with a large, conical shade, and threw down a brilliant circle of light. The general and his chief of staff moved to the head of the table, and Osaka joined the group standing round it. As he had expected, a large map was pinned out on the table, and on this map were hundreds of little paper flags which represented the positions of the opposing forces. The Russians were represented by black flags, and the Japanese by a miniature replica of their national flag, *i.e.*, white, with a rising sun in red inset in the lower half.

The farm was connected by telephone with the headquarters of every large unit in the field, and, in addition, just behind the firing lines, hundreds of specially-trained observers, carrying field telephones, reported continually the progress of the battle. The constant stream of messages thus pouring in were quickly sifted in the telephone room, and then passed by an orderly to the staff officer most nearly concerned. If a unit miles away advanced or retired, the flag which represented it on the map made a corresponding move. Thus the general could, merely by glancing at the map, see at any time how the attack was progressing.

Osaka studied this bird's-eye representation of the battle then in progress with the keenest interest. The Russian position faced south; they were holding about twenty miles of a chain of mountains which ran almost due east and west. Their right flank was strongly posted on a broad river, and their left on the end of the range where it rose abruptly from the plain. On the map the two irregular lines of flags, the black and the white, ran parallel along the whole length of the position, but at one end, the east, Osaka saw with delight that a group of white flags had advanced right on to the Russian position.

The chief of staff pointed to this group of flags. "Gentlemen, as you see," he said, "the enemy is holding us along the whole front, but here we have partially succeeded in turning his left flank. The general intends to push this advantage with every available man. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to weaken our centre and left, for the general reserve will not be used until later. The troops required from these sections will march to-night. Detailed written instructions on this point will presently be issued to all concerned. The general wishes you to impress on all unit commanders of the centre and left the vital necessity of showing a bold front and of continuing the attack in order to deceive the enemy as to our altered dispositions. When the turning movement has succeeded the whole line will press forward, and the general reserve will be thrown in to complete the defeat of the Russians. These are the broad lines of the general's plans; the members of the staff will now issue to you your individual orders. That will do, gentlemen, thank you."

The group round the table broke up and moved away, but Osaka waited expectantly. He had not yet been told why he had been sent for. The chief of staff looked up suddenly and called his name, and then, seeing him close at hand, exclaimed: "Oh, there you are! Come round here, will you?" Osaka moved round the table and stood beside him. "This is what the general wants you to do," said the chief of staff, bending over the map and pointing to a bridge over the river. "That bridge must be destroyed at dawn to-morrow. It is of vital importance that this should be done without fail, for, if our turning movement succeeds, some of the enemy will fall back westwards and escape across it. In any case, it affords them facilities for a counter-attack round our left, a very likely move, I think. None of our guns here can reach the bridge, which, as you see, is defiladed from direct fire by those hills. It was for this reason that your howitzer was wired for and the line cleared to make way for it."

Osaka studied the map, and saw that the bridge was behind the extreme right of the Russian position, and appeared to be over five miles from the Japanese line.

"The brigadier reports that there is only one point from which the bridge can be seen," continued the chief of staff. He pointed to a hill on the map. "This is the point. I am afraid that it is rather a forward position for your gun, but we must risk that. After all, the gun will be firing from behind the hill, and the enemy might not be able to locate it. The C.R.A. telephoned to-day to the effect that he had found an excellent position on good, rocky

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ground, and that the epaulement will be ready for the gun before you get there."

III.

THE great gun was in position at last; it had taken an entire infantry battalion the whole night to get it there. In fact, for the last few hundred yards up the long slope to the foot of the hill, the services of another battalion had to be requisitioned, as the human gun-teams, which had been toiling all night in the snow, were completely exhausted, and men were falling in their tracks. The soldiers worked willingly to get the howitzer into position, for well they knew what a powerful auxiliary it would be.

Osaka found that the C.R.A. had been as good as his word, for not only was the epaulement ready for the gun, but a field telephone had been laid to the top of the hill, where a cunningly hidden bomb-proof shelter had been erected for the use of the "observer." It was from this spot that the fire of the gun would be directed. When Osaka, accompanied by a telephone orderly, reached the shelter, the stars were still blazing from a clear, frosty sky, and all that could be seen of the landscape were the grey, ghostly outlines of some of the nearer snow-clad peaks. There was nothing to be done save to sit down and wait for the daylight.

To Osaka it seemed that that first faint flush on the mountain-tops which heralded the coming of dawn would never appear.

Suddenly the telephone orderly gave an exclamation, and pointed to a faint object far up in the sky behind them. This object appeared to be a tiny, dim crescent of light. It was the captive balloon, and the crescent of light was caused by the sun's rays striking its varnished globe of yellow silk. Owing to its great height above the earth the balloon caught these rays while the mountains below were still in shadow. A few minutes later the long-looked-for tinge of rose appeared on the highest peaks. The azure shadows fled swiftly into the valleys, then in an instant a lofty, snow-clad pinnacle gleamed like a living coal, the sun-fire leapt from peak to peak; it was as if an auroric curtain had been suddenly lowered to just below the levels of the peaks, and had set them all aflame. But in a few moments the red-gold beacons paled to silver, the grey light swept the valleys, and it was day.

As soon as Osaka could discern the bridge he took the range of it carefully with the range-finder he carried; the distance was, as near as possible, nine thousand seven hundred yards. After checking it several times he moved to the telephone to issue instructions to the gun section below. Just at that moment the bell rang. Osaka took up the receiver and a breathless voice greeted him.

"Halloa! halloa! Are you there?"

"Halloa! Yes," replied Osaka.

"Is that Captain Osaka?"

"Yes; who is speaking?"

"C.R.A. this end. Balloon reports large body of cavalry and horse artillery moving behind hills in direction of bridge. Have you got the range?"

"Yes, sir."

"Splendid! Balloon's report says force looks like a Cossack division; it has a strong advanced guard thrown out. This advanced guard was about two miles east of the bridge about twenty minutes ago, so you haven't much time to lose."

"Very good, sir." Osaka's voice betrayed his delight. The enemy was about to make a turning movement, as the chief of staff had expected, and he, Osaka, was to be instrumental in stopping it.

He rang up his subaltern, who was at the foot of the hill, and issued concise instructions as to the laying of the gun. Much depended on this first shot. In a few minutes his subaltern replied that all was ready.

Osaka turned his field-glasses on the bridge and waited; in a few minutes a small party of horsemen came into view. He saw at a glance, from their little shaggy ponies and their equally distinctive shaggy-looking head-dress, that they were Cossacks. They crossed the bridge at a canter, first by twos and threes and then in little groups of a dozen or more at a time. But Osaka did not fire—he was waiting for larger game. Nor had he long to wait. Soon a solid body of horsemen riding in close formation, four abreast, came into view. It was the head of the main body; the commander evidently considered that he was in no danger, and that it was, therefore, unnecessary to assume a less compact and, therefore, less vulnerable formation.

Still the little gunner waited, telephone in hand, and it was not until the entire length of the bridge was thronged with a dense column of horsemen that he at last gave the order to fire.

The whole hill shook with the force of the explosion, and Osaka watched anxiously for the result of the shot. A huge column of water leapt up just beyond the bridge—the shell had missed. The gun commander groaned aloud, but his directions down the telephone for the firing of the next shot were

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"INTO THE MIDST OF THIS SEETHING MASS CAME THE SECOND SHELL, A VERITABLE

given in a quiet, level voice. Again he turned his glasses on the bridge and waited. The sight was one of the greatest confusion. The shot was so unexpected, and the shriek of the enormous projectile as it flew close overhead so astounding in volume, that in an instant panic reigned supreme. Some of the horsemen set spurs to their horses and dashed forward, while others turned to gallop back. The result was a hopeless block of plunging horses and excited men. Into the midst of this seething mass came the second shell, a veritable aerial torpedo containing over five hundred pounds of high explosive.

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AERIAL TORPEDO CONTAINING OVER FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE."

The observer saw a bright flash, followed instantly by a dense cloud of black smoke which towered up from the bridge. When this had cleared away he noted with glee that one of the spans had disappeared. Along the whole length of the bridge a mass of men and horses still struggled frantically.

Osaka aimed this time at the east end of the bridge—again the shot told. Now a crowd of horsemen found themselves entrapped, for the shell had cut the bridge behind them. The fate of the unfortunate Cossacks thus marooned under the terrible fire of the big gun was pitiable. They surged helplessly to

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and fro, and in the *mêlée* several horses and riders were pushed over the broken ends of the roadway and fell into the swirling stream below.

The sight of these swimming and floating downstream seemed to point to the only possible chance of escape, and as he gave the order to fire again Osaka saw hundreds of men and horses leap or fall into the river. This shell demolished one of the piers, which caused the spans it had supported to sink down into the river at a steep angle. The bridge was now a wreck, the whole face of the broad stream was covered with struggling men and horses, and at last the great gun was silent.

IV.

MEANWHILE the battle had recommenced along the whole front, and on the other flank twenty miles away the Japanese turning movement had succeeded. But the Russian general reserve, which had arrived too late on the scene to avert this disaster, was now fighting grimly and holding the Japanese in check.

Although the Russian commander could no longer look for victory, he still hoped to withdraw his army without serious loss. He relied on his Cossack division, and believed firmly that it would carry out the mission he had entrusted to it, as he knew that his opponents' cavalry was weak. He argued that when the Japanese found themselves attacked in rear their pressing attentions would be diverted, and he would then be in a position to withdraw his troops in safety. Everything now depended on the success of the Cossacks. When he learnt that they had been held up by the unexpected destruction of the bridge he was in despair. After a hurried consultation with his staff he wired back to the Cossack commander :—

"My left flank driven in and falling back slowly. Your success imperative to ensure safe retreat of army. Silence gun at all costs. Engineers will repair bridge."

On receipt of this message the Cossack commander began a series of desperate attacks on the hill covering the gun. He pushed his horse artillery boldly forward, and under cover of its fire his squadrons in widely extended formation "galloped for" the hill. But the Japanese infantry there were well entrenched and supported by numerous machine-guns, and the gallant horsemen were mown down by hundreds and driven back again and again. Meanwhile, the hidden howitzer, invisible to the enemy, continued to fire all day, and silenced many of the plucky little guns which had dared to come out into the open.

When night came the Russian engineers, under cover of the friendly darkness, began the task of patching up the bridge. But in this work they counted without Captain Osaka. That indomitable little gunner carefully laid his gun on the bridge just before dusk, and at midnight one of his terrific projectiles landed on it with dire results.

It was at this stage, just when his efforts seemed to be crowned with complete success, that misfortune overtook Captain Osaka. Had he rested content with one shot, or even with half-a-dozen, all might have been well, but he continued to fire for over an hour. He had set up luminous direction discs before dusk, and knew that he had thus ensured good practice even in the dark; but he forgot, or ignored the fact, that the flashes of his giant gun were reflected above the hill in the sky. These flashes served to guide a force of some four thousand Russians who were creeping forward to attack under cover of darkness. This night attack was in the nature of a forlorn hope, a last desperate expedient to capture and silence the inexorable guardian of the Japanese left flank. It was successful. The Russians largely outnumbered their opponents on the spot, and, after a fierce struggle, carried the hill at the point of the bayonet.

Osaka, when he saw the hill was about to be taken, left his observation post and fled down to his precious gun. To get it away was, he knew, impossible, but, at any rate, it should be defended to the last man. And defended to the last man it was: the gunners lined the high sand-bag parapet of the epaulement and fought like Paladins. But they were quickly surrounded and overwhelmed. The Russians first threw hand-grenades, which, in the circumscribed space, killed or disabled most of the gunners, and then rushed in with the bayonet, pouring over the breastworks from all sides like a flood. Osaka himself was struck down from behind with a blow from a clubbed rifle.

The gun was captured at last, but it had done its work, for, while the Russians were taking it, another night attack was in progress on the other flank. Here the Japanese were pushing the advantage gained during the day, and were carrying all before them. They had already advanced five miles along the Russian position, and, in tactical parlance, were "rolling up the line."

When Osaka recovered consciousness, something wet and icily cold was pressing on his

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face. He opened his eyes to find that it was snowing fast. He sat up and looked round; he was still somewhat dazed, and what with the falling snow and the darkness could at first make out nothing. Then he discerned the dim shape of the howitzer looming up a few feet away, and like a keen agony came the sudden realization of his position. He was alive and to all intents and purposes a prisoner, while his men were all killed or wounded and his beloved gun in the hands of the enemy. On the morrow it would be turned on his own comrades. From its position it could enfilade many of their lines and work dreadful havoc. With this thought came a grim resolve. He must somehow disable the gun before morning. But how? That was the question. The enemy were all round him, and only a few yards away, manning the sand-bag parapet of the epaulement. If the snow ceased he would be discovered; there was not an instant to lose.

He stretched himself face downwards on the snow, and began to worm his way towards the gun. As he did so his brain worked at the fever speed of thought. How was he to effect his purpose? Single-handed it would be impossible even to remove the massive breech-block, much less carry it away. He could tamper with the breech mechanism, but with his bare hands could do no lasting damage. He might block the barrel with pieces of rock or anything else which came to hand, and trust to the obstruction not being discovered. This plan would take time, and he could hardly hope to carry it out with the Russians only a few yards off. He reached the gun and stood up cautiously. The breech was open; evidently the gunners were about to load when the alarm came.

For several minutes Osaka stood there and racked his brains for some method of disabling the monster. Then a sudden inspiration came—there was only one method of blocking the barrel effectually in the circumstances.

He must do it with his own body!

He began cautiously to scoop out with his hand and arm the snow which had drifted into the "chamber"; then, without hesitation, but slowly and painfully, for his limbs were stiff with cold, he climbed in head foremost.

He was not a moment too soon. Hardly had he reached his hiding-place and partially closed the breech behind him by pulling at the breech-block with his feet, when a shot rang out close by. This was followed by a fusillade. As the din grew, Osaka realized that this was no mere night alarm, but a determined counter-attack by his comrades to regain the position and the lost howitzer. Hope leapt up in his breast, but it was followed instantly by fear. What if his comrades should recapture the gun and find him hiding inside it? Would they credit his reasons for being there? He shivered at the alternative. To be branded as a coward, even to be suspected of cowardice, that would be worse than death, a million times worse. The very thought made him clench his fists and draw his breath through clenched teeth with a soft, hissing sound. Would they dare to doubt him, a Samurai and an officer?

But his fears on this score proved to be unnecessary. The attack continued for about an hour with the greatest fury. At one time the attackers seemed to be quite close; Osaka's heart thrilled at the sound of a Japanese cheer, and the bullets rang on the gun like hail. Then he heard the sound of guttural voices and hundreds of heavy feet crunching through the snow as they doubled past—they were Russian reinforcements. There was a still more furious burst of fire, then it began to roll away, and died down almost as suddenly as it had begun. The counter-attack had failed.

Osaka had taken advantage of the noise made by the attack to worm his way along the fifteen-feet barrel towards the muzzle. He selected this position so as to minimize the chances of discovery, and because, the gun being slightly narrower here, his body would more effectually block the bore and his purpose would be better served.

The barrel at this point was a tight fit, even for a little man; the icy steel wall pressed upon Osaka on all sides and interfered with circulation, and the intense cold of it penetrated through all his clothing and seemed to sear his flesh. As the long hours passed his position grew increasingly intolerable; at length it became a nightmare, an obsession. The monster was squeezing him to death. Instinctively he struggled to free himself, but, despite his most desperate efforts, he was unable to move. Then he realized that he was not merely wedged into the barrel, he was also frozen to it; the snow on his clothes had at first partially melted, and then, as the heat of his body failed, had frozen to the metal. His legs and arms were still free, but almost too numbed for movement.

The sound of voices close at hand aroused him from a sort of torpor into which he had fallen. He raised his head, which was pillowed on his arms, and looked out through

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"SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY, FOR HIS LIMBS WERE STIFF WITH COLD, HE CLIMBED IN HEAD FOREMOST."

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the muzzle of the gun. It was growing light; he could see some rocks on the hillside quite clearly. At the same time he became aware that the noise of the battle, which he had heard almost unconsciously for hours, had grown louder and nearer. His spirits rose, for he knew that the gun would soon be in action, and his torture would be at an end. He was also cheered by the approaching din of battle. Surely it could only mean that the great turning movement on the other flank had been successful, and that his victorious comrades were "rolling up the line," advancing towards him along the Russian position.

A deep guttural voice boomed out close by, and he felt the barrel begin to move slowly to the right; it was evident that the gun was about to be trained on some target. Presently the lateral movement stopped; all that Osaka could see now was the upper half of a snow-clad fir tree. How beautiful it looked! Again the guttural voice boomed out; a light broke in from the breech end. The gun was about to be loaded. Would they discover him? He heard the familiar squeak of the shell-lift—he had intended to have it oiled, but the grease-case had been dropped in a drift and lost when the gun was being dragged into position the night before. Was it really only the night before? It seemed ages ago. The light disappeared suddenly; something had entered the breech of the gun. Was that loud hiss the soft, squishy noise which he had heard so often when the breech-block went home? The gun was loaded. Once more the guttural voice snapped out a word of command. The muzzle began to travel slowly upwards, and the fir tree disappeared from view. Far away on a distant ridge a number of little dots were moving; they were either his comrades advancing or the Russians retiring, he could not tell which. Again the movement ceased. The gun was laid and about to fire.

Suddenly a wild desire to live came to the man hidden within it. Was it worth it after all? No one would ever know what had become of him. His name would not be added to the glorious list of Japan's heroes who had died for their country. Little Mirami and the old people, they would wait and wait, and always hope for news of him. Little Mirami—he saw her now, standing in the sunny doorway in her rainbow-silk kimono, smiling her frozen little smile and waving him good-bye. "Sayonara"—"Banzai"—the sweet tones of her voice rang in his ears. And there was the old man, his father, behind her with his proud face and the non-committal eyes which veiled, as he well knew, a great and tender heart. And within, face downwards on the cushions, his mother; she—— Fools, would they never fire? His nerve was breaking, he *must* scream aloud.

Once more the guttural voice. Now! No, the muzzle began to move upwards again. Ah! they wanted more elevation. He tried to wedge himself more firmly to prevent slipping, but his frozen limbs refused to move. When the barrel at last came to rest all that Osaka could see through his little circle of vision was a tiny, fleecy cloud, rose-pink at the approach of dawn. They were about to fire now. He could stand it no longer—he must live to see Mirami once again—only once again.

Exhausted body and tortured brain were giving way under the terrible strain, but the brave spirit of the Samurai still held sway. "For the lives of your comrades," it whispered, "for the Emperor and Japan."

Captain Osaka bit his bleeding lips again to stifle the cry which would have saved him, and fixed his staring eyes on the distant rosy cloud.

When the smoke had cleared away the Russian gunners stared in awed amazement at the strange phenomenon before them. A little snow-clad fir tree, a few yards down the slope, had suddenly turned to a brilliant crimson.

Then one of the gunners gave a strange, strangled cry. "Look! Look!" he screamed, pointing with a trembling hand to the muzzle of the gun. "Holy Mother of God, the great gun is dribbling blood!"

They turned to look. The giant muzzle was smothered in a deep crimson fluid which, as they watched, ran down the barrel in tiny streams and dripped slowly on to the snow beneath.

The superstitious Russians crossed themselves and drew back; for several moments they gazed in horror at the sight, and no man spoke.

At last the silence was broken by an officer. "Fall in!" he commanded, in an unsteady voice. "This is due to some devilish device of these accursed pagans. See"—he pointed to a bulge and a thin crack which had appeared half-way down the massive barrel—"the gun has burst!"

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THE COOKS' DEPARTMENT.

Romance in a Registry Office.

By E. S. VALENTINE.

Illustrated by George Morrow.

IN a recent novel the heroine's mother explains her sudden plunge into trouble to a confiding but inexperienced friend :—

"I had just sent for the housemaid to give her notice because she never dusts the lustres properly, when she turned round and gave it—notice, I mean—to *me !*"

"What a blessing ! It saved you the trouble."

"On the contrary, if you knew anything of domestics, Valentia, you would see that it put me in a most awkward position ; and now I shall have to live at Mrs. Hunt's."

"To live at Mrs. Hunt's ?" repeated Val, as if stupefied. "Why, you're not going to leave your charming house ? And who is Mrs. Hunt—an old friend of yours ?"

"Don't you really know who Mrs. Hunt is, Valentia ?"

"No ; I haven't the faintest idea."

"She has a registry off—— Well, may you never know ! Certainly I'm not going to leave my house. The idea of such a thing !"

What is the greatest problem of the day ? Men might fumble over the question, but any woman in the kingdom would tell you at once. It is the problem of the servant. To the servant it is the problem of the master and mistress.

Everybody in the kingdom is more or less interested in this problem, enormous, baffling, insistent ; and yet it is astonishing how little is known about the great sources of servant supply. Domestic science is beginning to be taught—but what about domestic servant science ?

Here is an army of over a million persons, divided off into corps, regiments, and battalions. How is this army recruited ? How is it trained ? What is its scale of pay ? Who fixes the rate of wages ? For how long does it enlist ? How many butlers are there ? How many cooks and housemaids ? Where do they come from ? Where do they go to ? And how does this army, bearing the worthy banner of "Ich Dien," compare with the armies of other countries ?

In London's West-end are several large establishments which may be called servants' recruiting offices. Not one household head in a thousand ever so much as crosses their portals or knows anything about them ; but their workings are full of humour, human interest, and even of romance. One of these

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emporiums for the supply of butlers, men-servants, footmen, pages, housekeepers, cooks, parlour-maids, up-and-down maids, house-maids, and kitchen-maids has grown to be almost a national institution.

"We will assume," said my mentor, as we threaded our way through the corridors, "that you want a cook."

"Certainly," I asserted.

"We can live without poetry, music, or books;
But civilized man cannot live without cooks."

"Then we will pass to the cooks' department. This way, if you please."

On the glass door was painted a legend, "Single-handed Cooks."

"No," I said, firmly, "we will not go in there. The sight of these poor, faithful, mutilated servants would unman me. We——"

But the door was already opened, and as my gaze rested upon scores of female cooks, young, old, thin, fat, dark, fair, the manager explained that the phrase "single-handed" merely meant cooks unassisted by a kitchen-maid. They were the sort of cooks most in demand. It seemed strange to see them sitting here, chatting together, reading newspapers, in their bonnets, gloved, always with that air of expectancy—waiting, always waiting. In spite of the absence of a range, it gave the place the aspect of a vast kitchen.



SOME TYPES OF FEMALE SERVANTS.

The manager spoke to one of them—a stout, red-faced, middle-aged one.

"Ah, Mrs. Briggs! Back again?"

"Yes," she said, simply. "Tarts."

"I remember—your strong point. Pastry. They didn't like it?"

"Wouldn't touch it. What could I do? I couldn't stay and be 'appy, could I?"

Turning to me, the manager said: "She's a little eccentric, but a splendid cook. Was nine years with Lady M——. She has tried three places since, but can't get suited. Have you any idea where the best cooks in England come from?"

I reflected. "Cookham?" I hazarded.

"No; Herefordshire. I haven't any idea why, but the cooks in London with the longest records of service hail from Herefordshire. Nottinghamshire produces the most nursemaids, and Kent the most housemaids, of any county in proportion to their population. Do you see that woman in the corner—with the large green hat? She has been, I think, fifteen years in service, and spends exactly one year in each place. Her mistresses all do their best to keep her, for she is a capital cook, clean and good-tempered; but at the end of a year she invariably gives notice. Her excuse frankly is that she wants a change of air and scene. Where do you wish to go now, Miss Partridge?"

"Harrogate, if you please," is the reply. "I'm expecting the lady here this morning. As a matter of fact, there are three ladies coming."

"Well, make a good choice."

"Thank you, sir. I dare say the change of county will do me good."

We leave the cooks—the most independent of any in domestic service—and pass on to the housekeepers' department. On the way my mentor observes:—

"Cooks' wages tend to increase yearly. Single-handed cooks nowadays never take less than twenty-six pounds, and they usually want thirty pounds. But where they have help from a kitchen-maid or a scullery-maid they ask and receive thirty-five to seventy pounds a year. But many good cooks have a preference for a small family, and prefer to manage without assistance."

More cooks—these obviously very superior. One of them is notably refined and attractive in appearance. She is reading a book. My eye catches the title; it is "Felix Holt."

"She? Oh, she's a lady. Gentlewoman born. Most exclusive. Left penniless and learnt scientific cookery at a school. She might have become a governess or a school-teacher, but as it is she can command eighty pounds a year. She was three years with Mrs. B——, of Curzon Street. Many governesses are now going in for cookery. Their time is their own, and they are not

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interfered with, and if they really love cookery they couldn't do better."

We pass into the department labelled "Governesses and Lady Nurses." Here may be seen an assortment of young ladies—and some not so young—of family, whom circumstances have obliged to seek a livelihood. It is either this or the stage, and in many instances this room has proved the ante-room to the green-room. It has also proved a preliminary to matrimony and an "establishment."

"If servants," declares my guide, "are not so good as formerly, the cause is, first of all, in over-education, which makes the average girl aspire to something higher and 'freer' than service. The old-fashioned servant is now a thing of the past. But there is still not much difficulty in obtaining girls for the better class of houses, as here there was



GOVERNESSES AND LADY NURSES.

always the chance of higher wages and an improved position from an under-post to an upper servant's place. If I were to advertise for a clerk or governess I should have five hundred applications by the next day's post. If I wanted to fill fifty kitchen-maids' places I might have fifty applicants. But if I wanted a house-parlour-maid or good plain cook to go single-handed I should probably not get a single reply. So difficult is it to get this class of servant that I never charge them any fee, but ask a higher fee of the mistress for supplying them."

In the opinion of one—perhaps London's leading authority—the servant of the present day has not the same knowledge of her work possessed by the servant of former times, and of course this must result in less domestic peace and comfort, and these must react upon national habits and national character.

Here we are in the "interview room," where half-a-dozen mistresses are examining would-be recruits for the army. One catches such phrases as "Last place," "Always had twenty-four," "Not exactly a follower, ma'am," "Very well, I will take it up at once and let you know," etc.

What a contrast to this scene is that offered by the men-servants' department! What a place to study facial character! The department is divided off into sections or groups, such as "couples," "odd men," "foreign men," "stablemen," "hotel employés," as well as "private servants." Here you are in another world, dominated by Jeames Yellowplush in mufti and out of employment.

But the romance of the registry office is in the cellars. Here, in this admirably-managed establishment, are kept the records of some two hundred thousand servants for a half-century past. Amongst these names are some who have risen out of the servant class altogether—nay, even have attained high rank and wealth. A countess died recently who, before her marriage, was well known to the stage. Before becoming an actress she had, like the great Mrs. Siddons herself, filled a humble situation as lady's-maid. But that was not all. By turning to these

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THE INTERVIEW ROOM.

books, more than a generation ago, her character was found, signed by a lady still living.

"A—— B——," it ran, "who has been with me for six months as nursery-maid, I have found, on the whole, to be honest and willing, but hardly as interested in her work as I wished for. I think she would do better in another situation."

One wonders whether, when in after years the ex-nursery-maid took precedence of her ladyship at, say, a Drawing Room, the ex-employer would have considered the young countess's "situation" as more becoming.

It is truly astonishing to think of the personal history that is embedded in these cabinets—how many names of parlour-maids, housemaids, footmen, and valets who have afterwards set up for themselves in the world, and even cut a notable figure in it. Not long since the captain of an ocean liner called at a registry office and asked to be allowed to see



MEN-SERVANTS.

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GROOMS.



CHAUFFEURS.



WAITER.



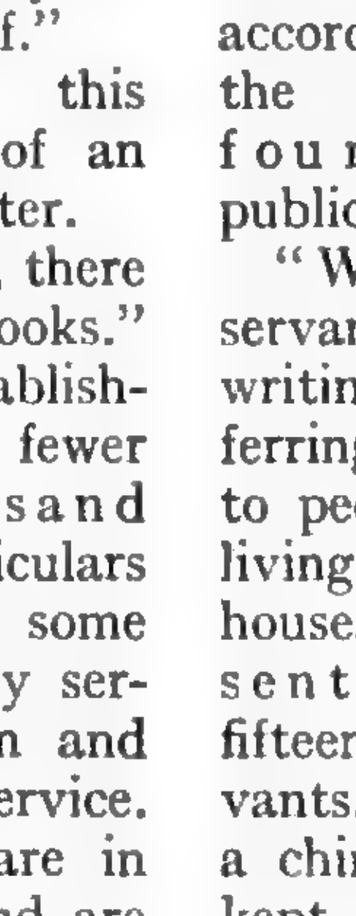
BUTLER.



VALET.



FROM ABROAD.



LADY'S-MAID.

and take a copy of a character given him thirty years ago by a gentleman in Half Moon Street, in whose service he was then as page.

"William Brown has given great satisfaction for twelve months. He is honest, reliable, and intelligent, and should do well in any capacity for which he offers himself."

The signature to this testimonial was that of an historic Cabinet Minister.

On the other hand, there are the "black books." These, in one establishment, contain no fewer than thirty thousand names, with full particulars —terrible particulars, some of them—of as many servants, the very scum and dregs of domestic service. These particulars are in alphabetical order, and are constantly being referred to; they have been carefully compiled through the aid of employers, newspapers, and the police. Such servants stand no chance whatever of securing situations through that agency, especially as these records are supplemented by a rigid system of inquiry.

"For instance, we take all the London and provincial directories published. These are often sufficient of themselves to throw much light on the statements of servants who are inclined to play tricks in the matter of 'character.' The discrepancies we sometimes find between the prosaic statements of the directory and the accounts servants give us of certain establishments are very striking. A man once referred us to a gentleman in Yorkshire for his character, stating that he had been two years and a half with him as butler. We accordingly looked up the gentleman and found he kept a public-house!

"We sometimes find servants in the country writing to us and referring for characters to people who, while living in quite tiny houses, are represented as keeping fifteen or twenty servants. Once we found a chimney-sweep who kept cook, kitchen-maid, and scullery-maid. Again, we have found a clerk, living with his wife and family in three or four rooms, maintaining a dozen servants or more. Many clerks, accustomed to the pen, are quite able to write a letter that would pass muster as a genuine character with perhaps ninety-five ladies out of a hundred. And it's often possible to write from addresses which would deceive anybody. On the other hand, one of our clients had her suspicions aroused because a certain butler's character was dated from a 'cottage.' But lots of places are

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called cottages where butlers are kept, and in this case it happened to be a wealthy marchioness who called her country place a cottage.

"Not long ago a woman turned up who made a handsome living as a 'character' writer. (One wonders, by the way, if this has any connection with the much-advertised 'characters told by post.') There was another case before a magistrate where a man, after procuring for himself a situation by writing his own character, very shortly afterwards got a place for his daughter in the same establishment by writing a character for her. I am afraid that forged characters are on the increase, but so are the means for exposing them. Would you like a typical case? Here is one of Charles Barlow, butler, recommended by Mr. Pitt-Rivers, 4, Duke Street, Charing Cross, as honest, sober, capable, and trustworthy, and also by Mr. Charles Bruce, of The Grove, Llanbadarn Fawr, near Aberystwyth. We set about investigations, and found that there was a Grove Cottage, that it was a small workman's house, occupied by a Mr. Charles. There was a mansion, however, near, where a Mr. Bruce had been a butler. As for No. 4, Duke Street, that was a letter bureau!

"Again, there is the case of Margaret Gully, who presents a beautiful letter from Mrs. A. Campbell, of 8, Portland Square, Workington, Cumberland, recommending her as cook-housekeeper at fifty pounds a year and praising her virtues. Inquiry at 8, Portland Square showed it to be a small cottage rented at a few shillings a week, and occupied by a poor woman who kept no servant!

"Why, sometimes they even go so far as to impersonate the complaisant mistress who is losing a 'treasure,' and in one notable case the professional 'mistress' drove up in her carriage and pair (hired by the hour) to call upon the prospective employer, and enacted the high-born dame, zealous for her faithful cook's interests, so perfectly that the lady was charmed and engaged the 'jewel' on the spot. Less than a month later the cook decamped with the case containing her fellow-jewels, and her whereabouts remain still unknown."

Mrs. Hunt, of registry office fame, is now over ninety years of age. Her husband was a printer, and she kept a small bookshop, which she admits was not a very paying concern.

"Ladies used often to ask me if I could tell them of a good servant when they came into the shop, and I was considered to know a good one when I saw her. One of these ladies suggested that I should keep a registry office and make a business of it. My husband didn't want me to trouble about it, but I had a fancy I should like to try. Accordingly I started a small office, which gradually grew to what you see at present. There are seven of my family in it—sons and daughters and grandchildren—and we employ altogether about a hundred and thirty persons. My youngest son is the great organizer, and it is he who has brought the business to its present dimensions.

"The Council schools," observes Mrs. Hunt, "have certainly made better scholars, if they haven't multiplied servants; but hardly a day passes but we receive some extraordinary examples of penmanship. We have gained a good deal of experience in deciphering curious letters and application forms. Occasionally some of these are quite laughable. Here is one written by a young woman which, on first reading, would seem to suggest that we were in the undertaking line:—

"'Madam,—Will you please let me know what your fees are, as I am not like to live.—Yours respectfully.'

"The writer merely wishes to pay her fee, because she is not likely to leave. Here are a few application forms as filled in, from which you will gather that there are occasional grounds for misunderstanding and discontent in the world of domestic service. Nevertheless, one servant writes us:—

"'My master is a dredful Strick master he will not alow you to go out off park Gates without spaking to Him, but strick masters make good servants.'"

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The Disappearing Trick.

By W. PETT RIDGE.

Illustrated by Joseph Simpson, R.B.A.

THE office was preparing to close, complying thus with the suggestions of a new Act to which Mrs. Ransome objected and the three assistants gave approval. The windows did not cover themselves with shutters, but gave up their week-ends for the benefit of youngsters who came to gaze at the miniature wagons loaded with real coal, and, with less interest, at current prices of Derby Brights, Cobbles, Roasters.

At one minute past one o'clock the young men told Mrs. Ransome they thought it was going to be, as an exception to a rule, a fine Saturday afternoon, adding that their address until six-thirty would be the Cricket Pavilion, Regent's Park. Mrs. Ransome, placing leather-bound account-books in her bag, said she hoped they would have a good game. At five minutes past one she herself left and turned the key in the padlock outside the door.

"My dear!" cried a voice, in a panting way, intended to suggest that its owner had been hurrying.

"That you, James?"

"Don't tell me," begged Mr. Ransome, distressedly, "that my blessed watch is losing again. I shall have to get it seen to."

"Scarcely worth the trouble," she said, with calm.

"But it's the present you gave me when we were married."

"I mean that if you had it regulated, it wouldn't make any difference to the time you keep."

"My love!" he protested, walking by her side. "Don't let's begin one of those arguments of ours that lead nowhere, and only upset my health. As a matter of fact, I've been very busy all the morning going round for orders, and——"

"Did you get any?"

"Trade seems quiet," he explained. "Scarcely anything doing. But, as I say, I've been on the go, and it was my firm intention to get back before twelve, so as to give you a hand with the books."

"Suppose you help with them now. This bag is heavy."

Mr. Ransome called to a boy and transferred the task to him; at the Tube station he requested his wife to give to the young porter the sum of threepence. At the ticket-window she made purchases, and if she had not taken charge of the bag it would, apparently, have found its way to the Lost Property Office. In the lift and in the train Mr. Ransome gave a description of the route followed that morning in the interests of the business, the rebuffs experienced, the statements made by various folk concerning gas-stoves. He seemed hurt by the circumstance that his wife made no comment, and, arriving at Gillespie Road and coming out again into the sunlight, he commented on this.

"Don't you believe me, darling?"

"Not a single word," she replied.

As they reached the turning of their road he offered to take the bag, but she declined now to accept his services. At the gate he stopped and mentioned that, the day being fine, he did not propose to go indoors; the open air suited his constitution better than the atmosphere of stuffy rooms. If his wife would be good enough to let him have a sovereign——

"No!"

"Or, say, fifteen bob."

"No!"

"Well, then, half a quid."

"No!"

Mr. Ransome, seriously disturbed, demanded to be informed the meaning of this unprecedented behaviour. Ever since their marriage, a period that represented nearly twelve months—"I shall get you to let me have some money next week," he remarked, casually, "so as I can buy you a memento of some kind for the anniversary"—during all that space it had been the custom for Mrs. Ransome to furnish sums necessary to meet

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current expenses, as he called them, on request. Where, might he ask, was the sense in departing from a fixed arrangement? Mrs. Ransome, giving the answer readily, declared she was tired of going on in the old way. Mr. Ransome had represented himself to her in courting days as a land surveyor; it appeared to her he was really nothing better than an inspector of pavements.

"That's unkind!" he asserted.

Mrs. Ransome assured him it was not her intention to be pleasing. He seemed content to loaf about the streets of St. Pancras doing nothing, and it was, in her opinion, right that he should receive the wages generally paid to those who performed no work. So far as this Saturday afternoon was concerned, she proposed to give him not a single penny.

"Be careful!" he warned. "Be very, very careful. It takes a lot to rouse me, but once my blood is up, and once I make up my mind to a certain course of action, nothing can stop me."

Mrs. Ransome asserted that she was not afraid of him or of anything he might do. If he cared to come in and assist with the books, a task that could be completed within a couple of hours, a sum would then be paid to him. A neighbour came to a window and opened it with the pretence of snipping leaves of geraniums in the long box, but evidently desirous of listening to the conversation.

"Look here!" he said, asserting himself bravely in face of an audience. "There's a lot of talk on your side, laying down the law, and ordering people about. Allow me to remind you that you're not addressing one of your clerks; you are speaking to a man."

"That's your own description, not mine."

"And furthermore," with increasing determination, "I'm going to behave like one. I've got a certain amount of what is called grit in my nature, and for the first time since we've known each other I'm going to make it evident. I can afford to be quite independent of you." The neighbour's wife came to bear her husband company. "I can go back to my old profession, and make a living."

"I should like to see you do it."

"You shall!" he announced, in a shout. "That is to say, you won't exactly see me do it, because I intend never to let you catch sight of me again. But I'm off now, and I don't care who knows it. And if it's any consolation to you, you can take it that you've brought all the trouble on yourself. Try to realize that you're looking on me for the last time."

"Good-bye!" she said.

He swaggered away at a fair pace. Near the end of the road he slackened, expecting to hear a call; this did not come, and before taking the turn he looked back. His wife was out of sight, but the neighbour and the neighbour's wife gazed interestedly. Mr. Ransome found satisfaction in the knowledge that news of his resolute and determined behaviour would be promptly distributed.

He counted his money carefully on the way to Finsbury Park, and discovered that the total sum was two shillings less than the amount he had expected; he remembered now that, to fill in time, he had taken an early lunch. The exact sum at his disposal was three and ninepence, and it occurred to him that this would have to be carefully disbursed in order to take him over the small period of time occupied in waiting for his wife's repentance. At six o'clock, after watching games in the park, he obtained the services of a man who was lounging outside a coffee-shop, gave him sixpence, and entrusted to him a letter, the envelope of which was marked "Wait answer."

The man returned to the coffee-shop within half an hour, and demanded another sixpence for bringing the reply, and, this sum being paid with great reluctance, announced that the lady had said there was no answer. Mr. Ransome, considerably pained, wrote a very definitely worded letter announcing his intention of drowning himself in the lake on the morrow, and carefully mentioned the address where he was staying. To save further expense he himself took this to the house so soon as dusk came.

In the basement sitting-room he could see that his supper had been prepared in the usual way, and it required all the available resolution to prevent himself from going down the steps and enjoying the meal. I think he would have done this, only that it occurred to him that it was a piece of great impertinence to assume he would return that evening. He dropped the alarming communication in the letter-box; hurried off in the way of one who has lighted the fuse for an explosion. In walking back to the coffee-shop where he proposed to stay for the night, he thought, with a certain amount of satisfaction, of the astonishment that would be created, the remorse which would follow the reading of the note.

"Serves her jolly well right," he decided.

The next morning after breakfast he found himself with ninepence in his pocket. The rain was coming down, and the proprietress

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"THEY RETURNED AT NOON, WET THROUGH."

of the establishment inquired humorously whether he proposed going to early service. Mr. Ransome replied that he had a much more interesting prospect. On the matronly lady expressing doubts, he gave her details, and she insisted on being allowed to accompany him, declaring she had not enjoyed a really hearty laugh for years and years.

"They'll be dragging the water to find your body," she cried, relishing the joke in anticipation, "and your wife will be on the bank crying her eyes out, and all the time we shall be behind a tree, looking on."

They returned at noon, wet through, and when Mr. Ransome made a suggestion his companion declared, with some vehemence, that rather than allow him to have a meal in the establishment on credit she would prefer to see her name in the Bankruptcy list. He protested it was not his fault that Mrs. Ransome had been unmoved by the threat contained in the letter.

"It's my misfortune, anyway," said the disappointed lady. "Haven't fully dressed myself so early on a Sunday since I was a kid, and it's been all for nothing." As a concession, she later lent him the newspaper, and gave him two thick slices of bread and butter for an evening meal.

Mr. Ransome, on the Monday morning, found himself face to face with a crisis that never fails to strike terror into the hearts of indolent folk. It seemed that he was within measurable distance of being compelled to work for a livelihood. The thought had sometimes come to him in dreams after a late supper, but he felt certain its present appearance could not be imputed to over-feeding. Always living by what he called his wits, he felt an intense objection to relying upon any other means, and he walked down Seven Sisters Road in the hope of discovering a suggestion. A shop window containing masks and wigs and tinselled costumes met his eye; after a moment of hesitation he went in. To the sharp youth in charge he explained that he was arranging a fancy-dress ball at the Athenæum in Camden Road.

"Where do you live, sir?"

Mr. Ransome gave one of his business cards, and went on to point out that many of the people who had taken tickets would come to him and say: "Look here, this is all very well; but where the deuce are we to borrow make-up and dresses, and so forth and so on, from?" What he recommended was that the firm should furnish him with something like a sample of their wares—say, an effective beard—and then he could convince applicants that Somers and Co. was the firm to patronize.

"Right you are," said the alert youth, taking down some boxes. "Try some of these on."

He selected one that came nearer to nature than most, and in going with the cardboard box under his arm mentioned that this was one of the finest strokes of business the firm had done for many a long day.

He would have paid his visit to the coal-office at once, but it was necessary that the luncheon-hour should be selected, for then the clerks would be out. He found a free library, and in the shelter of a sloping news-

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paper-stand fixed the beard. In Holloway Road, at a second-hand shop, he effected, at a loss, an exchange of clothing; at five minutes past one he reached the office. As he entered his wife looked up with the smile appropriate for wholesale customers.

"Morning, madam," he said, in a genial voice that he hoped differed from his usual method of speaking. "Can you tell me where I shall find Mr. Ransome?"

"Haven't the least idea."

"Then perhaps you can tell me where I can find his wife?"

"You are talking to her," she answered, "now."



"RATHER THAN ALLOW HIM TO HAVE A MEAL IN THE ESTABLISHMENT ON CREDIT SHE WOULD PREFER TO SEE HER NAME IN THE BANKRUPTCY LIST."

He searched an inside pocket, and ejaculated "Bother!" Mrs. Ransome waited for an explanation of this word of regret, and he told her the documents he wished to exhibit had been left behind at Lincoln's Inn. "Fact of the matter is," he went on, "your husband has come into a tidy amount of money, and, although he won't be able to touch it for some time, my people thought he would be glad to know at the earliest possible moment."

"How much?" she inquired.

"So far as my memory serves me, it runs into four or five hundred a year. Of course certain formalities have to be gone through, but——"

"That will make him quite independent."

"Ye—es," he said, doubtfully. "What I should advise him to do, if he asks me, would be to put it into this business. You could rent the place that's to let next door; you could take on more hands, and eventually turn the whole business into a limited company."

"Sounds attractive," she admitted. "It is just what I've often talked of doing, only I've never had enough capital."

"If you will kindly put yourself into communication with him and arrange a meeting between us, everything can be fixed up without delay. There's no need for me to waste your time, madam."

"But it is a question of wasting your time," she remarked. "You would much rather see him now, I suppose?"

"By the by, you might give me some

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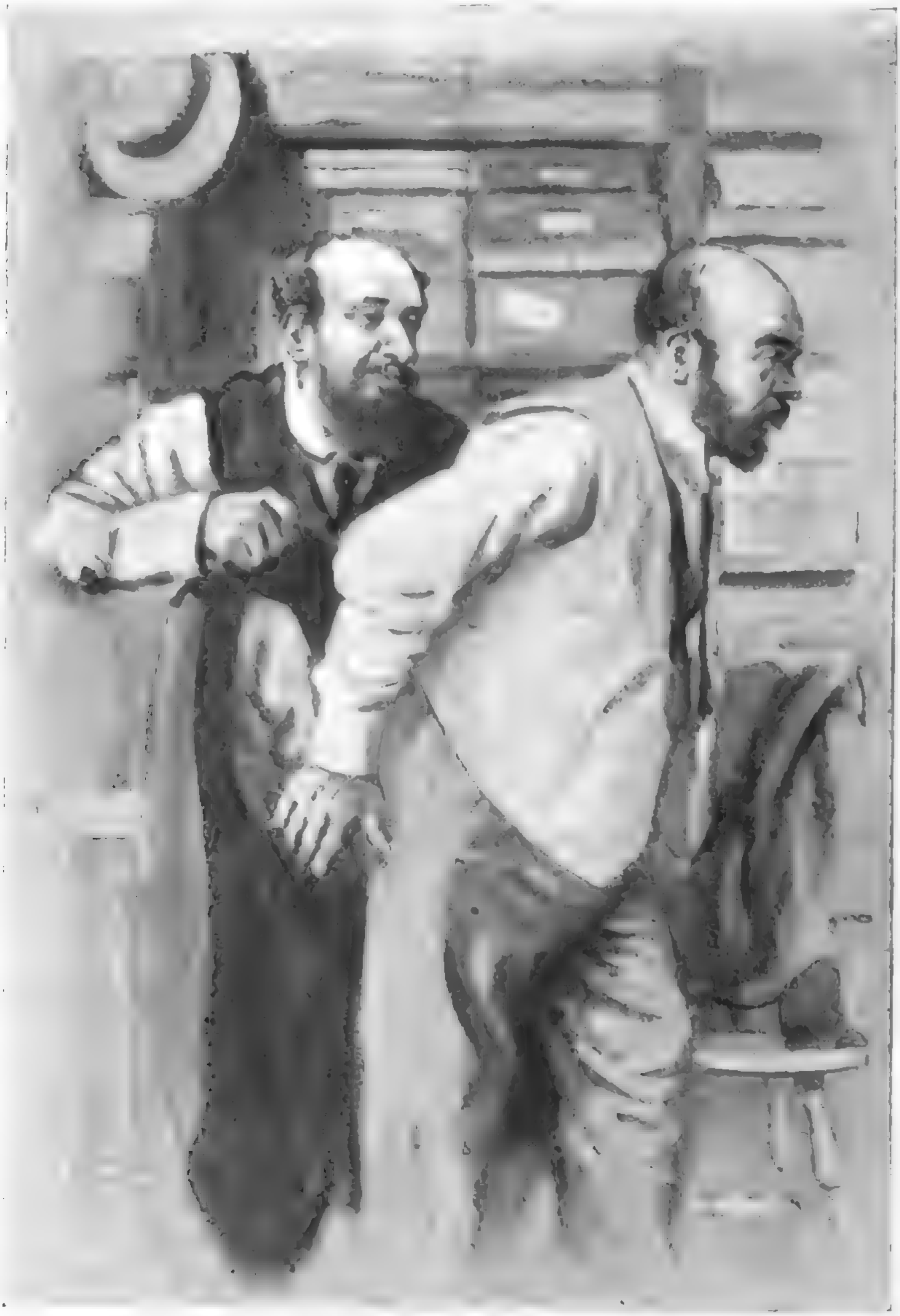
idea of what he's like. I'm naturally interested in what I may term favourites of fortune."

"He's not much to look at," said Mrs. Ransome, "although, for some reason, I used to think he was. For one thing, he doesn't take enough trouble over his personal appearance. And just of late he seems to be trying to gain a prize for sheer laziness."

"That doesn't sound to me like what a married lady ought to say about her partner."

"Very few married ladies have to say it. I only mention it because you asked me, and because it happens to be true."

"Are you sure," he inquired, earnestly, "you're not somewhat too hard on him?"



"HE EFFECTED, AT A LOSS, A CHANGE OF CLOTHING."

"I should find that difficult. If he'd only go away, and stay away, I should be a great deal happier. But you wanted to see him, didn't you?"

"If it can be managed."

Mrs. Ransome stepped aside to a retired

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corner where a wash-hand bowl stood. She returned with a small mirror.

"If you take off that beard, James," she remarked, "and glance at this, your desire will be satisfied!"

He strode to the doorway and returned with a distracted air. He looked steadily at her for a few minutes; she returned his gaze.

"How did you guess?" he demanded.

"They telephoned through from the shop in Seven Sisters Road to find out if it was all right."

"My dear!" he cried. "What is to be done with a woman like you? I've tried all ways to make an impression on your mind, and nothing seems to answer. And if you only knew it" — here he broke down — "I'm just about as hungry as a hunter."



"'IF YOU TAKE OFF THAT BEARD, JAMES,' SHE REMARKED, 'AND GLANCE AT THIS, YOUR DESIRE WILL BE SATISFIED!'"

"My lunch is on the table in there," she said, pointing. "You can have half of it. When that's done, you've got to gain your living if you want to keep alive." She turned aside, and her voice softened. "We used to be fond of each other, James, once."

"We will again," declared Mr. Ransome, definitely. "In the future I'm going to be a different man."

"That's something. But I'd rather you promised to be a better one."

"It's what I meant to say," he explained. "Give us a kiss, like a dear old girl."

"Earn it first!" she directed.

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The Case of the Plain Man.

Third Article: "THE RISKS OF LIFE."

By ARNOLD BENNETT.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

I.

BY one of those coincidences for which destiny is sometimes responsible, the two very opposite plain men whom I am going to write about were most happily named Mr. Alpha and Mr. Omega; for, owing to a difference of temperament, they stood far apart, at the extreme ends of the scale.

In youth, of course, the difference between them was not fully apparent; such differences seldom are fully apparent in youth. It first made itself felt in a dramatic way, on the evening when Mr. Alpha wanted to go to the theatre and Mr. Omega didn't. At this period they were both young and both married, and the two couples shared a flat together. Also, they were both getting on very well in their careers, by which is meant that they both had spare cash to rattle in the pockets of their admirably-creased trousers.

"Come to the theatre with us to-night, Omega?" said Mr. Alpha.

"I don't think we will," said Mr. Omega.

"But we particularly want you to," insisted Mr. Alpha.

"Well, it can't be done," said Mr. Omega.

"Got another engagement?"

"No."

"Then why won't you come? You don't mean to tell me you're hard up?"

"Yes, I do," said Mr. Omega.

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself. What have you been doing with your money lately?"

"I've taken out a biggish life assurance policy, and the premiums will be a strain. I paid the first yesterday. I'm bled white."

"Holy Moses!" exclaimed Mr. Alpha, shrugging his shoulders.

The flat was shortly afterwards to let. The exclamation "Holy Moses!" may be in itself quite harmless, and innocuous to friendship, if it is pronounced in the right, friendly tone. Unfortunately Mr. Alpha used it with a sarcastic inflection, implying that he regarded Mr. Omega as a prig, a fussy old person, a miser, a spoil-sport, and, indeed, something less than a man.



"'COME TO THE THEATRE WITH US TO-NIGHT, OMEGA?' SAID MR. ALPHA."

"You can only live your life once," said Mr. Alpha.

And they curved gradually apart. This was in 1893.

II.

NEARLY twenty years later — that is to say, not long since—I had a glimpse of Mr. Alpha at a Saturday lunch. Do not imagine that Mr. Alpha's Saturday lunch took place in a miserable garret, amid every circumstance of failure and shame. Success in life has very little to do with prudence. It has a

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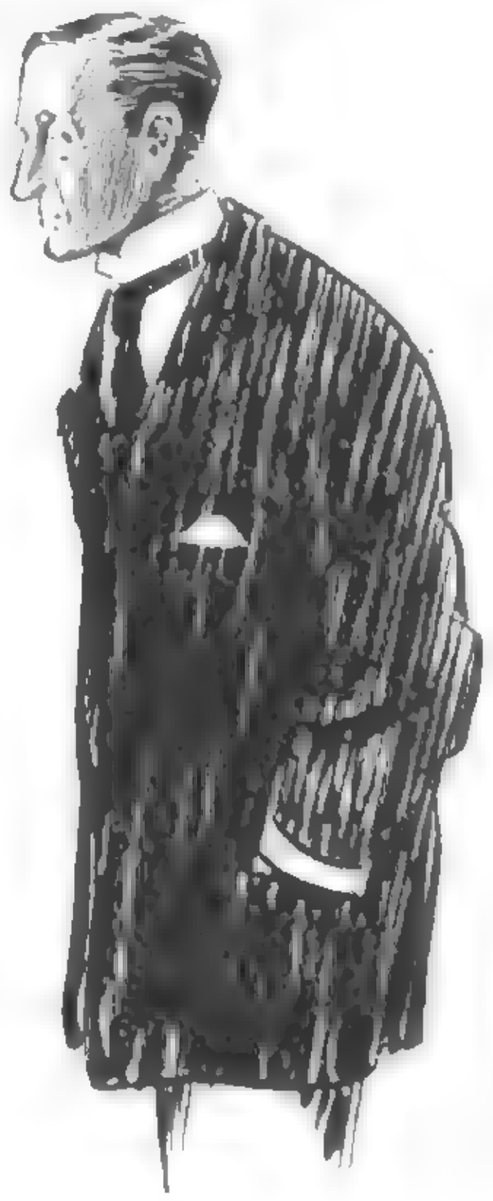
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great deal to do with courage, initiative, and individual force, and also it is not unconnected with sheer luck.

Mr. Alpha had succeeded in life, and the lunch at which I assisted took place in a remarkably spacious and comfortable house surrounded by gardens, greenhouses, garages, stables, and all the minions necessary to the upkeep thereof.

Mr. Alpha was a jolly, a kind-hearted, an immensely clever, and a prolific man. I call him prolific because he had five children. There he was, with his wife and the five children; and they were all enjoying the lunch and themselves to an extraordinary degree. It was a delight to be with them.





"'HOLY MOSES!' EXCLAIMED MR. ALPHA, SHRUGGING HIS SHOULDERS."

It is necessarily a delight to be with people who are intelligent, sympathetic and lively, and who have ample money to satisfy their desires. Somehow you can hear the gold chinking, and the sound is good to the human ear. Even the youngest girl had money in her nice new purse, to do with it as she liked. For Mr. Alpha never stinted. He was generous by instinct, and he wanted everybody to be happy. In fact, he had turned out quite an unusual father. At the same time he fell short of being an absolute angel of acquiescence and compliance. For instance, his youngest child, a girl, broached the subject of music at that very lunch. She was fourteen, and had shown some of her father's cleverness at a school musical examination. She was rather uplifted about her music.

"Can't I take it up seriously, dad?" she said, with the extreme gravity of her years.

"Of course," said he. "The better you play, the more we shall all be pleased. Don't you think we deserve some reward for all we've suffered under your piano-practising?"

She blushed.

"But I mean *seriously*," she insisted.

"Well, my pet," said he, "you don't reckon you could be a star pianist, do you? Three hundred pounds a concert, and so on?" And, as she was sitting next to him, he affectionately pinched her delicious ear.

"No," she admitted. "But I could teach. I should like to teach."

"Teach!" He repeated the word in a changed tone. "Teach! What in Heaven's name should you want to teach for? I don't quite see a daughter of mine teaching."

No more was said on the subject.

The young woman and I are on rather confidential terms.

"It is a shame, isn't it?" she said to me afterwards, with feeling.

"Nothing to be done?" I inquired.

"Nothing," said she. "I knew there wasn't before I started. The dad would never *hear* of me earning my own living."

The two elder girls—twins—had no leaning towards music, and no leaning towards anything save family affection and social engagements. They had a grand time, and the grander the time they had the keener was the delight of Mr. Alpha in their paradisaical existence. Truly he was a pearl among fathers. The children themselves admitted it, and children can judge. The second son wished to be a painter. Many a father would have said, "I shall stand none of this nonsense about painting. The business is there, and into the business you'll go." But not Mr. Alpha. What Mr. Alpha said to his second son amounted to this: "I shall be charmed for a son of mine to be a painter. Go ahead. Don't worry. Don't hurry. I will give you an ample allowance to keep you afloat through the years of struggle. You shall not be like other beginners. You shall have nothing to think of but your profession. You shall be in a position to wait. Instead

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"'IT'S A SHAME, ISN'T IT?' SHE SAID TO ME AFTERWARDS."

of you running after the dealers, you shall comfortably bide your time until the dealers run after you."

This young man of eighteen was precocious and extravagant.

"I say, mater," he said, over the cheese, "can you lend me ten pounds?"

Mr. Alpha broke in sharply:—

"What are you worrying your mother about money for? You know I won't have it. And I won't have you getting into debt either."

"Well, dad, will you buy a picture from me?"

"Do me a good sketch of your mother, and I'll give you ten pounds for it."

"Cash in advance?"

"Yes—on your promise. But understand, no debts."

The eldest son, fitly enough, was in the business. Not, however, too much in the business. He put in time at the office regularly. He was going to be a partner, and the business would ultimately descend to him. But the business wrinkled not his brow. Mr. Alpha was quite ready to assume every responsibility and care. He had brains and energy enough, and something considerable over. Enough over, indeed, to run the house and grounds. Mrs. Alpha could always sleep soundly at night, secure in the thought that her husband would smooth away every difficulty for her. He could do all things so much more efficiently than she could, were it tackling a cook or a tradesman, or deciding about the pattern of flowers in a garden-bed.

At the finish of the luncheon the painter, who had been meditative, suddenly raised his glass.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he announced, with solemnity, "I beg to move that father be and hereby is a brick."

"Carried *nem. con.*," said the eldest son.



"I SAY, MATER, CAN YOU LEND ME TEN POUNDS?"

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"I BEG TO MOVE THAT FATHER BE AND HEREBY IS A BRICK."

"Loud cheers!" said the more pert of the twins.

And Mr. Alpha was enchanted with his home and his home-life.

III.

That luncheon was the latest and the most profound of a long series of impressions which had been influencing my mental attitude towards the excellent, the successful, the entirely agreeable Mr. Alpha. I walked home, a distance of some three miles, and then I walked another three miles or so on the worn carpet of my study, and at last the cup of my feelings began to run over, and I sat down and wrote a letter to my friend Alpha. The letter was thus couched:—



"I WALKED ANOTHER THREE MILES OR SO ON THE WORN CARPET OF MY STUDY."

"My Dear Alpha,—I have long wanted to tell you something, and now I have decided to give vent to my desire. There are two ways of telling you. I might take the circuitous route, by round-about and gentle phrases, through hints and delicately undulating suggestions, and beneath the soft shadow of flattering cajoleries. Or I might dash straight ahead. The latter is the best, perhaps.

"You are a scoundrel, my dear Alpha. I say it in the friendliest and most brutal manner. And you are not merely a scoundrel—you are the most dangerous sort of scoundrel—the smiling, benevolent scoundrel.

"You know quite well that your house, with all that therein is, stands on the edge of a precipice, and that at any moment a landslip might topple it over into everlasting ruin. And yet you behave as though your house was planted in the midst of a vast and secure plain, sheltered from every imaginable havoc. I speak metaphorically, of course. It is not a material precipice that your house stands on the edge of; it is a metaphorical precipice. But the perils symbolized by that precipice are real enough.

"It is, for example, a real

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chauffeur whose real wrist may by a single false movement transform you from the incomparable Alpha into an item in the books of the registrar of deaths. It is a real microbe who may at this very instant be industriously planning your swift destruction. And it is another real microbe who may have already made up his or her mind that you shall finish your days helpless and incapable on the flat of your back.

"Suppose you to be dead—what would happen? You would leave debts, for although you are solvent, you are only solvent because you have the knack of always putting your hand on money, and death would automatically make you insolvent. You are one of those brave, jolly fellows who live up to their income. It is true that, in deference to fashion, you are now insured, but for a trifling and inadequate sum which would not yield the hundredth part of your present income. It is true that there is your business. But your business would be naught without you. You are your business. Remove yourself from it, and the residue is negligible. Your son, left alone with it, would wreck it in a year through simple ignorance and clumsiness; for you have kept him in his inexperience like a maiden in her maidenhood. You say that you desired to spare him. Nothing of the kind. You were merely jealous, of your authority, and your indispensability. You desired fervently that all and everybody should depend on yourself. . . .

"Conceive that three years have passed and that you are in fact dead. You are buried; you are lying away over there in the cold dark. The funeral is done. The friends are gone. But your family is just as alive as ever. Disaster has not killed it, nor even diminished its vitality. It wants just as much to eat and drink as it did before sorrow passed over it. Look through the sod. Do you see that child there playing with a razor? It is your eldest son at grips with your business. Do you see that other youngster striving against a wolf with a lead pencil for weapon? It is your second son. Well, they are males. these two, and must manfully expect what they get. But do you see these four creatures with their hands cut off, thrust out into the infested desert? They are your wife and your daughters. You cut their hands off.



"ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS TO EMPLOY A CERTAIN PRETTY TONE, AND MONEY WOULD FLOW FORTH LIKE WATER."

You did it so kindly and persuasively. And that chiefly is why you are a scoundrel. . . .

"You educated all these women in a false and abominable doctrine. You made them believe, and you forced them to act up to the belief, that money was a magic thing, and that they had a magic power over it. All they had to do was to press a certain button, or to employ a certain pretty tone, and money would flow forth like water from the rock of Moses. And so far as they were concerned money actually did behave in this convenient fashion.

"But all the time you were deceiving them by a conjuring-trick, just as priests of strange

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cults deceive their votaries. . . . And further, you taught them that money had but one use—to be spent. You may—though by a fluke—have left a quantity of money to your widow, but her sole skill is to spend it. She has heard that there is such a thing as investing money. She tries to invest it. But, bless you, you never said a word to her about that, and the money vanishes now as magically as it once magically appeared in her lap.

"Yes, you compelled all these four women to live so that money and luxury and servants and idleness were absolutely essential to them if their existence was to be tolerable. And what is worse, you compelled them to live so that, deprived of magic money, they were incapable of existing at all, tolerably or intolerably. Either they must expire in misery—after their splendid career with you! —or they must earn existence by smiles and acquiescences and caresses. (For you cut their hands off.) They must beg for their food and raiment. There are different ways of begging.

"But you protest that you did it out of kindness, and because you wanted them to have a real good time. My good Alpha, it is absurd for a man to argue that he cut off a woman's hands out of kindness. Human beings are so incredulous, so apt to think evil, that such arguments somehow fail to carry conviction. I am fairly credulous myself, but even I decline to accept the plea. And I say that if your conduct was meant kindly, it is a pity that you weren't born cruel. Cruelty would have been better. Was it out of kindness that you refused to allow your youngest to acquire the skill to earn her own living? Was it out of kindness that you thwarted her instinct and filled her soul with regret that may be eternal? It was not. I have already indicated, in speaking of your son, one of the real reasons. Another was that you took pride in having these purely ornamental and loving creatures about you, and you would not suffer them to have an interest stronger than their interest in you, or a function other than the function of completing your career and illustrating your success in the world. If the girl was to play the piano, she was to play it in order to perfect your home and minister to your pleasure and your vanity, and for naught else. You got what you wanted, and you infamously shut your eyes to the risks.

"I hear you expostulate that you didn't shut your eyes to the risks, and that there will always be risks, and that it is impossible to provide fully against all of them.

"Which is true, or half true, and the truth or half-truth of the statement only renders your case the blacker, O Alpha! Risks are an inevitable part of life. They are part of the fine savour and burden of life, and without the sense of them life is flat and tasteless. And yet you feigned to your women that risk was eliminated from the magic world in which you had put them. You deliberately deprived them of the most valuable factor in existence—genuine responsibility. You made them ridiculous in the esteem of all persons with a just perception of values. You slowly bled them of their self-respect. Had you been less egotistic, they might have been happier, even during your lifetime. Your wife would have been happier had she been permitted or compelled to feel the weight of the estate and to share understandingly the anxieties of your wonderful business. Your girls would have been happier had they been cast forcibly out of the magic world into the real world for a few hours every day during a few years in order to learn its geography, and its customs, and the terms on which food and raiment and respect can be obtained in it, and the ability to obtain them. And so would you have been happier, fool! You sent your girls on the grand tour, but you didn't send them into the real world.

"Alpha, the man who cuts off another man's hands is a ruffian. The man who cuts off a woman's hands is a scoundrel. There is no excuse for him—none whatever. And the kinder he is the worse he is. I repeat that you are the worst sort of scoundrel. Your family mourns you, and every member of it says what an angel of a father you were. But you were a scoundrel all the same. And at heart every member of the family knows it and admits it. Which is rather distressing. And there are thousands just like you, Alpha. Yes, even in England there are tens of thousands just like you. . . .

"But you aren't dead yet. I was only asking you to conceive that you were.

Believe me, my dear Alpha,

"Yours affectionately."

A long and a violent epistle perhaps. You inquire in what spirit Alpha received it. The truth is, he never did receive it.

IV.

You naturally assume that before the letter could reach him Alpha had been mortally struck down by apoplexy, double pneumonia, bullet, automobile, or some such enemy of joy, and that all the dreadful things which

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I had foreseen might happen did in fact happen, thus proving once more what a very wise friend I was, and filling me with justifiable pride in my grief. But it was not so. Alpha was not struck down, nor did his agreeable house topple over the metaphorical precipice. According to poetical justice he ought to have been struck down, just to serve him right, and as a warning to others—only he was not. Not merely the wicked, but the improvident and the negligent, often flourish like the green bay tree, and they keep on flourishing, and setting wisdom and righteousness at defiance in the most successful manner. Which, indeed, makes the life of a philosopher and sagacious adviser extremely difficult and ungrateful.

Alpha never received my letter because I never sent it. There are letters which one writes, not to send, but to ease one's mind. This letter was one of them. It would not have been proper to dispatch such a letter. Moreover, in the duties of friendship, as distinguished from the pleasures of friendship, speech is better, bolder, surer than writing. When two friends within hailing distance of each other get to exchanging epistles in order to settle a serious difference of opinion, the peril to their friendship is indeed grave; and the peril is intensified when one of them has adopted a superior moral attitude—as I had. The letters grow longer and longer, ruder and ruder, and the probability of the friendship surviving grows ever rapidly less and less. It is—usually, though not always—a mean act to write what you have not the pluck to say.

So I just kept the letter as a specimen of what I could do—if I chose—in the high *rôle* of candid friend.

I said to myself that I would take the first favourable occasion to hint to Mr. Alpha how profoundly, etc., etc.

The occasion arrived sooner than I had feared. Alpha had an illness. It was not alarming, and yet it was sufficiently formidable. It began with colitis, and ended with appendicitis and an operation. Soon after Alpha had risen from his bed and was cheerfully but somewhat feebly about again I met him at a club. He was sitting in an arm-chair in one of the huge bay-windows of the club, and gazing with bright interest upon the varied spectacle of the street. The occasion was almost ideal. I took the other arm-chair in the semicircle of the window. I saw at once by his careless demeanour that his illness had taught him nothing, and I determined with all my notorious tact and persuasiveness to point a moral for him.

And just as I was clearing my throat to begin he exclaimed, with a jerk of the elbow and a benevolently satiric smile:—

"See that girl?"

A plainly-dressed young woman carrying a violin-case crossed the street in front of our window.



"THE PRECAUTION MANIA."

"I see her," said I. "What about her?"

"That's Omega's second daughter."

"Oh, Omega," I murmured. "Haven't seen him for ages. What's he doing with himself? Do you ever meet him nowadays?"

Said Mr. Alpha:—

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"I happened to dine with him—it was chiefly on business—a couple of days before I fell ill. Remarkably strange cove, Omega—remarkably strange."

"Why? How? And what's the matter with the cove's second daughter, anyway?"

"Well," said Alpha, "it's all of a piece—him and his second daughter and the rest of the family. Funny case. It ought to interest you. Omega's got a mania."

"What mania?"

"Not too easy to describe. Call it the precaution mania."

"The precaution mania? What's that?"

"I'll tell you."

And he told me.

V.

"ODD thing," said Alpha, "that I should have been at Omega's just as I was sickening for appendicitis. He's great on appendicitis, is Omega."

"Has he had it?"

"Not he! He's never had anything. But he informed me that before he went to Mexico last year he took the precaution of having his appendix removed, lest he *might* have acute appendicitis in some wild part of the country where there *might* be no doctor just handy for an operation. He's like that, you know. I believe if he had his way there wouldn't be an appendix left in the entire family. He's inoculated against everything. They're all inoculated against everything. And he keeps an elaborate medicine-chest in his house, together with elaborate typewritten instructions which he forced his doctor to give him—in case anything awful should happen suddenly. Omega has only to read those instructions, and he could stitch a horrible wound, tie up a severed artery, or make an injection of morphia or salt water. He has a thermometer in every room and one in each bath. Also burglar-alarms at all doors and windows, and fire-extinguishers on every floor. But that's nothing. You should hear about his insurances. Of course, he's insured his life and the lives of the whole family of them. He's insured against railway accidents and all other accidents, and against illness. The fidelity of all his clerks is insured. He's insured against burglary, naturally. Against fire, too. And against loss of rent through fire. His plate-glass is insured. His bunch of keys is insured. He's insured against employers' liability. He's insured against war. He's insured against loss of business profits. The interest on his mortgage securities is insured. His wretched little automobile is insured. I do believe he was once insured against the eventuality of twins."



"SHE HATES MUSIC."

"He must feel safe," I said.

"Not the least bit in the world," replied Alpha. "Life is a perfect burden to him. That wouldn't matter so much if he didn't make it a perfect burden to all his family as well. They've all got to be prepared against the worst happening. If he fell down dead his wife would know just what to do. She knows all the details of his financial position exactly. She has to; he sees to that. He keeps her up to date in them every day. And she has to show him detailed accounts of the house as though it was a business undertaking, because he's so afraid of her being left helpless and incapable. She just has to understand that 'life is real, life is earnest,' and death more so.

"Then the children! They're all insured, of course. Each of the girls has to take charge of the house in turn. And they must all earn their own living—in case papa fell down dead. Take that second daughter. She hates music, but she has a certain mechanical facility with the fiddle, and so she must turn it into coin, in order to be on the safe side. Her instincts are for fine clothes, idleness, and responsibility. She'd take the risks cheerfully enough if he'd let her. But he won't. So she's miserable. I think they all are more or less."

"But still," I put in, "to feel the burden of life is not a bad thing for people's characters."

"Perhaps not," said Alpha. "But to be crushed under a cartload of bricks isn't likely to do one much good, is it? Why, Omega's a wealthy man, and d'you know, he must

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live on about a third of his income. The argument is, as usual, that he's liable to fall down dead—and insurance companies are only human—and anyhow, old age must be amply provided for. And then all his securities might fall simultaneously. And lastly, as he says, you never know what may happen. Ugh!"

"Has anything happened up to now?"

"I don't," said Alpha.

"Well," I ventured, "let me offer you a piece of advice. Never travel in the same train with Mr. Omega."

"Never travel in the same train with him? Why not?"

"Because if there were a railway accident, and you were both killed on the spot, the world might draw comparisons between the



"AT LENGTH MR. ALPHA SAID, 'I SUPPOSE THERE IS SUCH A THING AS THE HAPPY MEDIUM.'"

"Oh, yes. An appalling disaster. His drawing-room hearthrug caught fire six years ago and was utterly ruined. He got two pounds five out of the insurance company for that, and was ecstatically delighted about it for three weeks. Nothing worse ever will happen to Omega. His business is one of the safest in the country. His constitution is that of a crocodile or a parrot. And he's as cute as they make 'em."

"And I suppose you don't envy him?"

effect on your family and the effect on his, and your family wouldn't like it."

We remained silent for a space, and the silence was dramatic. Nervously, I looked out of the window.

At length Alpha said:—

"I suppose there *is* such a thing as the happy medium."

"Good-bye, Alpha." I rose abruptly. "Sorry, but I've got to go at once."

And I judiciously departed.

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Greta in the Tower.

By HAROLD STEEVENS.

Illustrated by John Cameron.

FOR the third time the girl with the flaming red necktie flung herself against the line of stalwart policemen drawn across Old Palace Yard close by the House of Commons door. A wisp of thistledown wafted by the wind would have made as much impression as did she on that steadfast living rampart.

A fatherly giant shot out an arm like an iron rod and barred her way. The force of the collision lifted her off her feet. Quick as thought she reached up and with her open hand struck him a resounding slap in the face.

His comrades laughed. The watching crowd guffawed. As for the big policeman himself, the impact of that soft little hand was hardly more than a caress upon his ample cheek. A momentary sense of foolishness brought a flush to his face, but he kept his temper admirably, and long before the cacophonous merriment of the crowd had spent itself he, too, was smiling.

"He must be a perfect dear to stand it," murmured the girl to herself, paradoxically, as she drew back to recover her breath and tighten her loosened hair for the next attempt.

Police-Inspector Burlingson saw the incident in quite a different light. He was neither amused nor annoyed. Like a general on the field of battle, or for that matter a peaceful chess-player, he had certain forces at his command with which it was his business to prevent or foil the action of certain other forces. That problem was his sole concern.

Thus it was that while others were laughing or jeering his watchful eye perceived, almost before they knew it themselves, that Greta Vane's comrades were kindling with emulation of her reckless daring. And, reading the vast crowd like a book, he saw that they too were growing excited by the sight of so much "sport," and might at any moment break loose and take a hand in it, with disastrous consequences to both person and property.

Burlingson knew also—and upon this sympathetic understanding his reputation as a manager of crowds had chiefly been built—that a crowd which has enjoyed a certain amount of what it is pleased to consider "fun" is far more tractable than a crowd which feels it has been unnecessarily baulked. On this occasion, in accordance with his usual custom, he had as far as possible allowed his men to be seen and not felt. Now that the time for action had come he acted swiftly and resolutely.

Choosing his moment to a nicety, he quietly gave the order, "Clear the Square!" Immediately the police line began to move forward, and before the crowd had realized that a change of tactics was toward, the police were in touch with them, urging them steadily backwards with voice and hand. The suffragettes found themselves driven in among the people. There was a good deal of chaffing, a lot of crowding, and some horse-play.

At first the suffragettes clustered together in a loose group, but presently, what with all the pushing and crushing, they found themselves driven apart and separated into twos and threes. Then the roughs in the crowd, who had come out for mischief and meant to have their fill of it, began boring in wherever they caught sight of women's headgear. Consequently each couple soon became the nucleus of a terrible "scrum."

Heaving and swaying, the masses of humanity reeled this way and that, sweeping from one side of the road to the other with appalling momentum. Occasionally some ruffian retired a little from the circumference of the "scrum," then charged in again, dashing himself against the living mass. With this happening at the margin, the pressure in the centre was terrific. Piercing shrieks arose on every hand, mingled with the shouts of men.

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"Get back! Get back, can't you! Don't you see she's fainting?"

The frantic exhortations seldom reached the ears of those who were in a position to act upon them, and were disregarded when they did. Some men of better disposition tried to form a circle round the women, linking arms, bracing their shoulders, and throwing all their weight backwards to ease the pressure.

Very early in the fray Greta Vane found herself separated from her comrades and swept along in the direction of Millbank. Several times she made vigorous efforts to rally back. As well might she have tried to stem the tide in the Thames. Her scarlet necktie was an oriflamme which caught the eye of the crowd and brought them crawling after her.



"A FATHERLY GIANT SHOT OUT AN ARM LIKE AN IRON ROD AND BARRED HER WAY."

Greta was an agile creature, however, and remarkably cool-headed. She had not the

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least intention of providing a nucleus for a "scrum" if she could help it. Bred as she was on north-country hills, her feet were nimble and sure. A thousand girlhood romps with a pack of brothers on slippery turf and shaling rock stood her in good stead that day. Often she was almost down, but each time by a marvel of activity she managed to regain her balance.

She soon recognized the impossibility of rejoining her comrades, and then her aim was frankly to get out of it all. The spice of dare-devil in her nature, as much as anything else, had brought her into this affair. Indeed, her resolve to come down to the House was taken so suddenly that she had had no time to get hold of the regular tricoloured ribbon, her choice of scarlet being dictated simply by a sense of revolutionary fitness. Now that she had had her fling she was satisfied, and her natural distaste for coarse and vulgar surroundings began to assert itself. Not content with keeping abreast of her neighbours, she conceived the idea of hastening her pace a little and so gradually drawing out and away from the mass.

Lithe as she was, she yet made slow progress at first. But the crowd really did not want to go, and therefore moved no faster than was necessary to keep comfortably ahead of the slowly-advancing police. This was an advantage to Greta, who gradually wormed herself forward, continually improving her speed as she made up on the vanguard, where the press was more open. She began to see clear road ahead. Half-a-dozen yards more and she would be free.

So she might have been but for that fatal scarlet necktie. As she broke out of the crowd its loosened ends, streaming backwards over her shoulder, drew the attention of a gang of street roughs whose distaste for the police had prompted them to put the greatest possible distance between themselves and the advancing force.

With a whoop and a yell the gang announced the pursuit. For a second or two Greta, unused to the ways of these gentry, had no idea that she was their quarry. Fortunately for her, a middle-aged working man plodding along just behind her called out, kindly enough, "Run it, miss! They're after you!"

She turned her head, and what she saw made her shiver, not so much from fear as from disgust. Half-a-dozen evil faces, convulsed with bestial glee, were swiftly pushing towards her. A chorus of hideous shouts split the air.

Greta brought her elbows to her sides, her clenched hands to her chest, and ran like the wind. In this again her boy-like training came to her aid. The lean ruffians behind her, well accustomed to street warfare, with its sudden flights and pursuits, burst from the crowd and came after her at top speed. This was the very game they most enjoyed—a weak and easy victim and a clear field, free from interference. Native cunning, as well as past experience, told them that on a day like this the police have their hands far too full to attend to every sporadic brawl; also that a handful of men with a single purpose, evil though it be, may safely disregard—at least for a time—a crowd of many times their own number.

As for Greta, terror threatened to take possession of her, but she fought it down after a moment or two, instinct telling her that she would probably need all her steadiness as well as all her strength, if she were to make good her escape. She realized that her best, probably her only, help lay in her own swiftness and resource. It occurred to her with a touch of grim humour as she sped along Old Palace Yard that she could hardly look to the police for aid after the way she had just been behaving towards them.

Beyond the area of turmoil the road was pretty clear, and she had a fairly good start, her pursuers at first being rather in each other's way. But presently they strung out in a line, and then the sound of their footsteps behind her soon told her that she was being overhauled. Her skirt hampered her terribly, short though it was. She realized, too, that the exertions of the evening had tired her more than she had been aware of at the time.

Fortune favoured her when the leading rough, carried away by the cowardly exultation of the bully who feels his victim almost within his grasp, stumbled on an uneven place in the macadam and fell sprawling, a violent oath upon his lips. The second man fell over him, and cursed him for it between gasps for breath. The third man avoided both, and, finding himself unexpectedly in front, increased his pace, yelling in ribald triumph. It was a horrid spectacle.

Yet the momentary respite had been invaluable to Greta. It gave her automatically a new start, and it also helped her to steady her nerve. Running with all her wits about her, she looked ahead into Abingdon Street and saw with a sinking heart how small a chance of refuge was there, with the high railings of the public gardens on one side

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and the closed doors of the houses on the other. The only avenue of escape in sight was Great College Street, and she felt that if only she could reach that in time she might in some way elude the pursuit. But could she do it? Anyhow, she would try her best.

While this train of speculation was formulating itself in her mind something caught her eye which sent a wave of relief through her. Just ahead of her, but a little to the left, in the shadow of the great Victoria Tower, a policeman suddenly appeared as though from nowhere. In another moment she must have shot past him. He was standing with one hand on the great ironwork gate of the Royal entrance; with the other he was beckoning to her.

"In here, missy!" he called, as she came within earshot, and pushing open the heavy gate he slipped through himself and held it open for her.

Hardly slackening her pace at all, she swerved from her course and ran in after him. The moment she was safely inside he threw his weight upon the gate to close it against her pursuers.

It was a clever manœuvre, swiftly conceived and smartly carried out. A period of service in the St. Luke's district of the Metropolis had given Edward Goadby a precise knowledge of the ways of these pestilent fellows who roam the streets in gangs, bent on violence and mischief. A single glance apprised him of the peril threatening the girl who had been so unfortunate as to attract their attention. For himself he did not fear them, knowing the breed to be as pusillanimous as it is cruel, and he would cheerfully have essayed to interrupt them in full career.

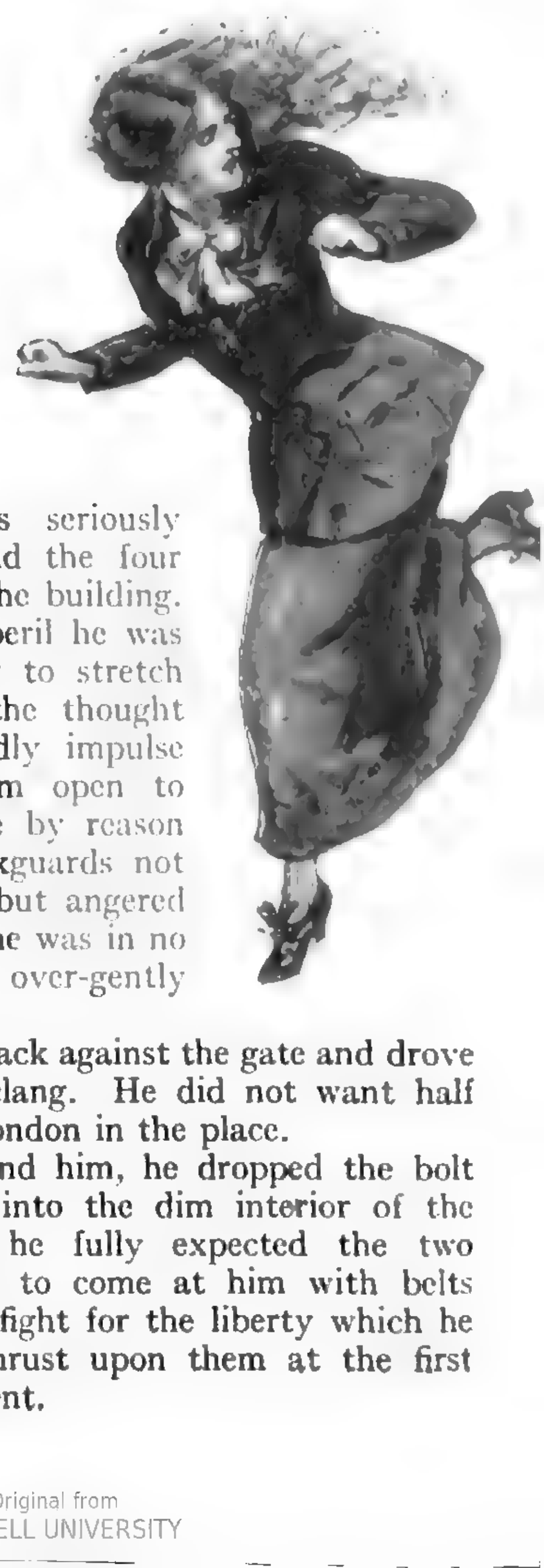
On the other hand, the chase might easily have gone past him, and, con idering that his duty was to remain at his post, he could not well have followed. In a *mêlée*, moreover, the girl was very likely to suffer injury or fright, he thought, try as he might to protect her. True, it was quite against the rules to admit a member of the public without a written order, but Goadby's long official life had taught him that there are times when red tape must be broken or it will strangle. He had also learned to trust his own judgment.

His manœuvre, as has been said, was a good one and well executed, and it was partly successful. Yet fortune was not altogether on Goadby's side, for so close on Greta's heels had the fellows been that before he could slam the heavy gate and slip home the bolt—another inch would have done it—the first of them came hurtling against it. To this weight was added in quick succession that of the following three.

The temerity of the ruffians took Goadby by surprise. He had fully expected them to sheer off at sight of his uniform. Perhaps in the gathering dusk they had not seen him quickly or clearly; or it may be that the beast of prey in their composition had overtopped their usual caution.

Whatever the reason, the plain fact was that Goadby's first line of defence was broken. The four men burst pell-mell into the lofty chamber which forms the hollow base of the Victoria Tower.

A vigorous right and left from Goadby sent the first couple sprawling to the hard stone floor. The remaining two, unable to check themselves, rushed past him.



Goadby was seriously alarmed to find the four roughs inside the building. For a girl in peril he was perfectly ready to stretch a point, but the thought that his kindly impulse might lay him open to official censure by reason of these blackguards not only alarmed but angered him. Hence he was in no mood to deal over-gently with them.

He put his back against the gate and drove it to with a clang. He did not want half the scum of London in the place.

Feeling behind him, he dropped the bolt while peering into the dim interior of the chamber, for he fully expected the two unhurt rascals to come at him with belts and put up a fight for the liberty which he intended to thrust upon them at the first possible moment.

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"Come out of it, you there!" he cried.

His voice reverberated from the vaulted roof. There was no answer. All he heard was the sound of rapidly retreating footsteps.

When Greta found herself inside the gate, with a stalwart protector between her and the enemy, all feeling of alarm had left her. She was glad beyond words that the chase was over, and her first desire was to thank her champion warmly for his most timely help. As she turned towards Goadby she saw the two men go down under his fists, and the other two dash past him and run straight at her.



"THE SECOND MAN FELL OVER HIM, AND CURSED HIM FOR IT BETWEEN GASPS FOR BREATH."

Her impulse was to dodge them and get back to the policeman's side. Then the idea came into her head that if she could draw off a portion of the enemy it would give her ally time to settle with the remainder. The terrible thought that the man who had saved her might be murdered for his pains if all four men got at him together put apprehension for herself quite out of her mind.

Quickly turning, she ran through an open door in front of her and into a passage which led sharply to the right. Hurrying blindly along, she came to another chamber which seemed to have no outlet, until her anxious eye caught sight of an iron corkscrew staircase in a corner. She sped towards it and began to climb as fast as she could.

The two men followed her. Their immediate and urgent concern was to get away from the officer's fists and the distasteful possibility of capture and a police-cell to follow. They took the only way of escape which presented itself—the way which Greta had found. Had they known whither it was to lead them, they would rather have chosen to face the trouble behind them.

Greta naturally thought they were pursuing her. She would try to elude them somehow or other, perhaps in the labyrinthine ways which she hoped might exist in the mysterious upper regions of the Tower. There were no lights on the stair, and, but for an occasional pallid glimmer which came in through narrow slit windows in the thick wall of the Tower, she would have been in total darkness.

Up and up she sped, urged onward by the sound of heavy feet rattling on the iron treads below her. The foothold was slippery, and her legs soon began to ache with the continued effort of climbing. She longed to pause and rest, but she dared not.

Eagerly she peered into the darkness in the hope of discerning some hiding-place, but she saw none. On the one side was always the iron baluster encircling the open well of

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the stair; on the other was now the solid wall with no opening in it except an occasional blind recess.

Once, feeling that she must rest or she would drop, she staggered into one of these and shrank back against the farthest wall, hoping that the men might pass by in the gloom, for she realized that sound travels upwards, especially in the sort of funnel which the staircase made, and that her light movements were probably not so audible to the men below as was their heavy tread to her above. But the recess was not deep enough to conceal her, or so she fancied, and she ran hastily out again, blaming herself for losing precious ground.

Just then she heard the men quicken their pace, and the sound of other and solid footsteps came up to her straining ears, while a slight tremor ran through the iron baluster. She divined with the greatest thankfulness that her friend the policeman must have started in pursuit.

Up and up and up, round and round and round, till her head swam. Darkness deep below and unknown heights of darkness above. Would the staircase never end? Her throat was dry; she gasped for breath with open mouth; her chest was bursting; she felt an agonized straining at her heart. A sort of paralysis was seizing her legs at the sockets, and the power to lift them seemed to be leaving her. By that subconscious gift of counting which some people have, she knew that already she must have climbed at least five hundred steps. It seemed an age since she had left the ground. She felt as if she must soon step out on to the floor of the sky. And still the quivering of the iron hand-rail showed her that she was pursued.

Unfailing in heart but conscious of a failing body, she clenched her teeth and determined that she would go on if she had to crawl on hands and knees. She had given up all hope of finding any issue from this interminable stair until she reached the top, if she ever did reach it—and if it had a top!

As she toiled past a particularly black patch of wall a strong, cold, steady draught of air suddenly struck her left cheek. She stopped at once. The draught blew transversely across the stair. Where could it come from? It might be a window, of course, though the dense black square from which it issued hardly looked like a window.

Staying herself against the wall, she put out a foot and felt the floor. It seemed all right. She took a step forward, then another, taking care not to trust her weight to the foremost foot until she was sure of solid ground for it to rest on. The place was as black as night, but she guessed that she was in a kind of tunnel. Stretching out her arms, she touched a wall. This she followed, still stepping cautiously. She had not gone more than a dozen yards when the tunnel ended as suddenly as it had begun.

She found herself in a dim but spacious chamber with sloping walls and a domed glass roof through which a little light filtered. It was quite silent. Not a soul was there, nor was there anything in it save some builders' tackle—scaffold-poles, barrels, ropes, and the like. The middle of the floor was railed round, and walking to the railing she peered over into an inky pit of appalling depth. There was light enough in the chamber to show her the head of a winding staircase, much broader than the one she had climbed. The stair wound downwards into the darkness of the pit. Far below, so far that it seemed sunk in the bowels of the earth, she descried a pale disc of lamplight, and the faint hum of sound which floated up to her listening ears might have come from some thoroughfare in another planet.

Intensely glad to get off that terrible staircase, she was now filled with wonder at these signs of habitation in a place so far from earth and so cut off that it seemed to belong rather to the clouds. Grotesque patches of shadow round the walls gave her an eerie feeling that the place was tenanted by strange living shapes silently watching her.

Relief, curiosity, a little dread, and a great weariness produced a temporary oblivion. Suddenly she heard shuffling steps, interspersed with breathless curses, at the farther end of the passage through which she herself had come, and the horror of her position rushed back upon her with redoubled force. This uncanny place affected her nerves more than anything that had happened before.

She looked about for a means of escape. The main staircase—no, she could not face that torture again so soon, for this stair must be as long as the one she had ascended. She felt that to set foot upon it would be to fall headlong. To her in her shaken state the earth seemed at an infinite distance which she could never traverse unaided—and pursued. Other exit there was none, save the passage by which she had entered, and that was impossible.

In the extremity of her distress she spied

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a manhole or open trap in the sloping wall of the chamber on a level with the floor. She sped towards it, picking her way through the lumber. As she stooped to crawl through she heard the astonished, oathful exclamations of the men at the unexpected sight of the big, dim vacant chamber. An explosive shout a moment later told her that they had seen her.

To them, of course, the place was as strange as it was to her. Had they taken time to explore it they would certainly have found the head of the main stair, and in all probability have descended by it, for their one object was escape from the policeman. That they had taken this extraordinary path was as much an accident with them as it was with Greta. These fellows had nothing of the leader in their composition. Their instinct was the instinct of the pack. In a gang they were capable of ferocious activity; separated from it they were nothing—resourceless, futile, timorous as corralled wolves. Seeing Greta disappear through the trap, they instinctively followed the superior intelligence.

She, rising from her stoop, found herself on a parapet of the Tower, the deep blue sky of early night above her and a darkling city far beneath. The fresh, clean wind sweeping by revived and exhilarated her. Close at her side she saw a short wooden stair leading to the roof of the chamber she had just quitted. Mounting this, she stepped on to a sort of open landing, in the middle of which rose yet another winding stair. It curled round a stout pillar, and its outer edge was unprotected by any hand-rail. Pausing to listen, she heard the two men growling and muttering on the parapet below.

The wind beat upon her skirt with force, and the open side of the stair gave a shuddering suggestion of danger; but she had no choice, and so, with her hand on the central pillar to steady her, she went cautiously up. Happily the stair was short, and a very few turns brought her to yet another platform. It was the last, for, towering above her, so high that it seemed to pierce the sky, was the great flagstaff. And still the men came blundering after her.

"Now I'm lost," she told herself, with a deadly sinking of the heart. "What a fool I was to come up here!"

A picture came before her eyes of a short and dreadful struggle, a slip, a frenzied clutch, an empty hand, and then—down—down——

In great distress she leaned back against the flagstaff.

"No, I'm not," she said, aloud, harking back to her unspoken soliloquy. For her back was not against the stout steel shaft at all, but against the rungs of a little wooden ladder.

It was a singular chance which might not have happened in a dozen years. For some weeks past the steeplejacks had been working on the Tower, and incidentally painting the flagstaff. It was their tackle which she had just seen in the upper chamber. On this occasion the unusual shortness of the recess had given them insufficient time to finish their work and remove their ladders before the reassembling of Parliament, whose first hours had been so painfully disturbed by the activity of the militant suffrage party.

The ladder was lashed to the staff, and Greta, gazing upwards, was astonished to see by the black silhouette against the sky that it travelled without a break from heel to summit, a hundred feet in air. The very sight of it was enough to turn most men giddy.

The girl felt no qualms. With her, as with Miss Maria Edgeworth, climbing ladders had always been a passion, ever since the day when at the age of five she had slipped away from her nurse and frightened that worthy soul almost into a fit by shouting loudly from the eave-gutter of her father's house.

"Jack and the Beanstalk!" said Greta, as she gripped a rung and began to climb. The old feeling of triumph in leaving the grovelling earth behind sent her spirits bounding up. This was a very different adventure from the grisly agony of the dark, cooped staircase or the weird dread of the deserted chamber. Up and up she went, the cool wind blowing upon her trim ankles, tossing her skirt about, and making the broad ends of her streaming necktie crack like whips.

Greta enjoyed it all; she was a born steeplejack. In three minutes she reached the top, and with some difficulty clambered over into the hollow crown, tearing her frock on its sharp iron points. She was amazed to find that the sides of the crown, which looked so tiny from the street below, came up to her armpits and held room for half-a-dozen people.

Her enjoyment was short-lived. The crown began to sway with a slow, oscillating motion, and, looking over the edge in alarm, she saw that both the men were on the ladder, and climbing. Another moment and she heard the rich voice of her friend the policeman

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coming up from the darkness at the foot of the shaft.

"Come down out of it, you blackguards!" he cried. Then, after a pause, getting no reply, "If I have to come up for you I'll chuck you down."

He was very much out of breath. Next he put his foot on the ladder and climbed a couple of rungs, presumably with a desire to scare them, for he went no farther.

Then Greta heard the harsh voice of the first man.

"C-come on, Tim," he said, explosively. "If the girl can do it, we can."

The violence of his utterance could not smother the quaver in it; his very teeth were chattering. Indeed, the men must have been scared half out of their wits to attempt such a thing. That might well have been, for the eeriness of these strange, silent heights, unlike anything they had ever seen or fancied before, might easily have upset stouter hearts than theirs.

Goadby wisely resolved to stay below. He had run his men to earth—or, rather, to air. He had them fairly cornered, and they could not escape him. He did not suppose for a moment that their malice towards Greta, utterly purposeless from the first, could have lasted till now, and he felt convinced that they would not attempt to harm her. Coward-like, they might abuse her for leading them into this trap, but they were too much cowed to attempt vengeance.

Greta still imagined, as she had imagined all along, that their purpose was to maltreat her. Perhaps they would throw her out of the crown; for to her mind men who could brutally pursue a woman without a vestige of cause were just as likely to go to any length, even to murder. She stooped down, took off her shoe, and prepared to beat the man over the knuckles as soon as he laid hand on the crown.

There was no need for that. The higher the men climbed, the more the staff swayed, until each oscillation must have traced a circle in the air two feet or more in diameter.

The leader was now near the head of the ladder, where it slanted outwards to pass up the protruding side of the crown. This was the worst part of the climb; the fellow saw that and could not face it.

He stopped dead, all the spirit gone out of him. His hands still clenched the ladder, but his knees shook so violently that he could scarcely keep his footing. He dared not move, either up or down. In his agony of helplessness and terror he began to gasp and groan, then to whimper.

Greta, looking over, saw his condition. Her state of mind was curious. She remembered and analysed it afterwards. In the space of a single instant she was conscious of a succession of three distinct and powerful emotions—relief to see her enemy disabled, triumph at his discomfiture, pity for his plight.

She dropped her shoe and, leaning out as far as she could over the side of the crown, stretched her right hand down towards him. Her little arm could not reach him, nor if it had could she have saved him.

For the wretched man, casting his eyes downwards for the first time, saw the black abyss below him. In that moment he was lost. Paralysis gripped him.

Greta cried loudly to him, "Don't look down! Look up! Look up!"

He could not. Dark as it was, she saw his knuckles go white with the frenzy of his clutch as he struggled for a hold that would give him confidence to turn his eyes from the fatal depths. The palsy of his legs was shocking; his feet rattled on the ladder. But his head never moved.

Greta called ceaselessly to him. She might as well have encouraged a dead man. Soon the trembling mounted to his arms.

Then without any warning the bloodless hands unclenched, his feet slid from the rung, his head fell forward, and with a frightful shriek he dropped.

The sway of the flagstaff heaved him outwards. At the same time a strong gust of wind caught his body and swept it away into space.

Frozen with horror, Greta's heart leapt, then stood icily still. She listened until it seemed useless to listen longer.

The second man was a little more than half-way up when he saw his mate fall. Shaking violently, he yet managed to put his legs through the ladder and sit down on one of the rungs. Then he wound his legs round the steel shaft and, clasping the sides of the ladder with his arms, fixed his teeth in another of the rungs and there remained.

Goadby, he too shocked by the tragedy, first persuaded, then threatened him, but to no purpose. The man would not, he could not, move.

The policeman's chief thought was still, of course, for Greta. How was he to get her down? He knew better than to attempt the ladder himself. Even if he did, he could not

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carry the man down, nor could he foree him to let go and break himself to pieces on the iron roof of the Tower. Goadby decided that the only thing to do was to send for the steeple-jacks. They might find some way of solving the difficulty.

But, meanwhile, what of the girl? The night was turning cold, she was thinly clad, and she was probably very hungry. Before the steeplejacks came she would be chilled to death. Again, fright might seize her; small blame to her if it did, he reflected, in such a position as hers and after the shattering experiences she had just gone through.

Greta was made of better stuff than that. Badly shocked as she was by the ghastly spectacle of a fellow-creature hurled to death before her eyes, she never lost hold of herself.

Hitherto her mind had been much too tensely engaged to give attention to the picturesque aspect of her surroundings. Now she turned her eyes from the things below and cast them about her in urgent need to shake off the incubus of horror which she felt was like to make assault upon her reason if she submitted to it. She looked out from her crow's-nest and was amazed at the entrancing charm of the scene laid out before her. It was indeed a sight such as few ever witness, and the beauty of it melted her heart and slowly purged her spirit of the terror of the evening.

Perched there in space between earth and sky, she looked out upon



"WITH A FRIGHTFUL SHRIEK HE DROPPED."

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the myriad lights of mighty London. Clustered in a dazzling blaze at the centre beneath her feet, the lights thinned gradually towards the outskirts, then dwindled into isolated twinklings scattered over the darkling plain as far as eye could see. "The Field of the Cloth of Gold," she murmured. Here and there a bright nucleus marked the heart of some suburb, and she occupied herself in trying to decide what each was. She saw the high spangled rim of Hampstead and Highgate, London's northern ramparts. Southward, the lighted mansions on Sydenham Hill rose out of the plain; far on the left towered the dark barrier of Shooter's Hill. Where no hills were, the trails of light led her eye into the heart of many shires—of Kent, of Herts, of Essex.

With fancy's eye she looked down into a hundred cosy homes where happy people, the day's toil done, sat content at their evening meal, safe on the solid ground. She envied none. She forgot cold and hunger; she felt she could stay up there for ever, queen of the air. Her eye travelled to the sky, dotted over now with the countless host of the stars, and she wondered dreamily whether they were the celestial reflections of the lights below or whether the earth was the mirror reflecting the heavens.

Her reverie was broken by the slashing strokes of Big Ben rising up at her, for she was far above the Clock Tower.

"Eight o'clock!" she said. "This won't do. I'm getting hungry."

Her spirit had recovered its poise.

When the giant rumble of the bell died away and the silence came again, her ear was attracted by a light spasmodic tapping directly under her feet. She had heard the sound before, though she had taken no particular notice of it, knowing it to be simply the halyard beating against the flagstaff in the gusty wind. The great Union Jack which the halyard carries during the Session had been hauled down at sunset, hours ago, according to custom. Now that her thoughts were actively bent on the problem of her descent a circumstance which had possessed no interest for her before became potent of suggestion. A mad idea came into her head. She looked down from her perch and saw that by descending a few rungs of the ladder she could easily reach the halyard.

"I think I'll try it," she said.

She cast one glance towards the humped and motionless figure on the ladder, and gave her head a small but decisive shake. Deliberately she took off her broad scarlet necktie, folded it into a pad, and put it into the bosom of her frock. That done, she climbed out of the crown on to the ladder and began to descend. When she came level with the halyard head, she took the folded necktie from her bosom and, reaching out, wrapped it round the rope.

For a moment or two she gazed steadily downwards, measuring the distance with her eye. Then, gripping the necktie tightly with both hands, she lifted her feet from the ladder and slid into space.

Goadby, hurrying back to the scene of action after dispatching a messenger for the steeplejacks, heard a peculiar sound above his head. Surprised, he looked up quickly and distinguished a vague black shape whirling down the halyard. He gave a startled shout, rushed forward, and caught Greta to his arms just in time to prevent her crashing against the massive iron stanchion to which the halyard was made fast. He set her gently on her feet.

"Thank you very much," said Greta.

The good fellow was too astounded to speak, but when Greta held out her hand to him he took it readily into his great paw.

"I'm sorry I slapped your mate," she said, with smiling eyes. "Will you accept my apology on behalf of the force?"

Goadby looked puzzled, but only for a moment. Then his face cleared, and he said, in a hearty voice, shaking her hand vigorously all the while:—

"That's all right, miss. Let bygones be bygones."

He paused and then burst out:—

"The masterpiece to me is how you ever brought yourself to do it. I wouldn't come down that rope for twenty pounds. But are you hurt, miss?"

"Thanks to you," said Greta, warmly, "not a bit."

The whole bewildering affair had ended so abruptly and in such utterly unexpected fashion that Goadby had difficulty in sorting out the thoughts that struggled together in his head.

"But aren't you frightened to death, miss? W-what on earth made you come up here and climb up there? I'd have trussed 'em up in a jiffy if you'd left 'em to me, miss."

"I was so afraid they would all set on to you," said Greta, modestly.

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"SHE LIFTED HER FEET FROM THE LADDER AND SLID INTO SPACE."

"My! you're a well-plucked one, miss. That you are, and no mistake!"

"What about you?" answered Greta, heartily. Then in a brisker tone, "What about that poor fellow up there?"

By tacit agreement they avoided speaking of the gruesome tragedy they had both witnessed. The pity in Greta's heart found shape in concern for his mate.

"Don't you worry about *him*, miss," said Goadby, with decision. "*He's* all right. We'll fetch him down later. This way, miss. Be careful how you come."

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The Comedy of Clerks.

Illustrated by Bert Thomas.

THERE is a certain lunching club in the City of London consisting exclusively of clerks (perhaps there are many such), the chief delight of whose members is to relate stories about themselves, their calling, and their employers. They are all hard-working, conscientious young fellows, in banks, offices, and counting-houses; but to listen to their conversation you would think they were boys still at school and chafing under the restraints of masters and lessons. And the unutterable folly of "chiefs," "bosses," and "governors"! How much better Rothschilds, the Bank of England, and hundreds of familiar concerns would be run if the running were only entrusted to these clerks!



"I SEE YOUR GOVERNOR'S BOUGHT TWENTY THOUSAND RIO PLANTAS."
"YES—SILLY ASS! HE NEVER ASKED ME."

"I see your governor's bought twenty thousand Rio Plantas."

"Yes—silly ass. He never asked me. I could have told him they were no good."

One prolific source of clerical humour consists of excuse-making for non-attendance at the office. A favourite formula for several generations has been, "I should like to attend my grandmother's funeral, sir." Sometimes this touching request occasions mild surprise.

"I thought, Mr. Brown, you buried one grandmother last year and another the year before?"

"That is true, sir," was the response. "It's my poor grandfather's fault; he married again."

"Very well. Let this be the last grandmother during the busy season, Mr. Brown."

Another employer, who had granted one of

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his clerks leave of absence to attend the funeral of an aunt, was shortly afterwards surprised to meet the young gentleman enjoying himself at a well-known cricket ground.

"You've made quick work of your aunt, Meadows," he remarked, grimly.

"Oh, I found I'd made a mistake in the hour. The funeral isn't until this afternoon, sir. I felt very low and thought I'd come here to get cheered up." And Meadows heaved a sigh.

By an odd chance that afternoon the employer again encountered his clerk in the vast crowd surging from the match.

"Ah, I'm very glad I didn't go to the funeral, sir," said the latter, brightly. "My tailor didn't send my clothes. I hear it was a most afflicting affair, and I should have been most completely knocked up to-morrow. Now I'm as fresh as a lark."

Once a clerk telegraphed from Norfolk: "Sorry cannot get to office to-day. Wash-out on line."

The employer instantly telegraphed back: "Cannot accept excuse. Buy a new shirt and come."

At other times it is a distinct qualification to be able and willing to laugh at the employer's jokes. Once after the senior partner had delivered himself of one of his alleged witticisms it was noticed that the office-boy was not laughing.

"Why don't you laugh, too?" asked a clerk, indignantly. "I don't need to," was the response. "I'm leaving on Saturday."

Another qualification in a clerk is to be able to turn away the undesirable who desire interviews with his "governor." In one office the young man found the work hard.

"I can't stave some of them off, sir. When I say you're out they won't believe me. They say they must see you—*simply must.*"

"Yes, I know. *But just tell them that* that's what they all say. You must be firm with them; I must have quietness."

That afternoon a lady called at the office. She desired to see Mr. Black, but the clerk declared that it was quite impossible.

"Oh, but I must see him," she protested. "I'm his wife!"

"That's what they all say," replied the clerk, who, the next day, was seeking a new situation.

Another prospective clerk—a Scot—was told that he was required to be partly in and partly outside the office.

"Eh!" he said, shaking his head dubiously; "and wha' happens when the door slams?"

The clerk's life is far from humdrum. It is full of interests, and the advent of the telephone and the lady typewriter has even



"'YOU'VE MADE QUICK WORK OF YOUR AUNT, MEADOWS,' HE REMARKED, GRIMLY."

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WHY DON'T YOU LAUGH, TOO?' ASKED A CLERK, INDIGNANTLY."

made communion with Cupid and the outside world far more feasible than it was to the clerks of the days of Dickens and Trollope.

There were a book-keeper and a pretty typewriter in a certain establishment, and by and by it became evident that the book-keeper was paying the young lady marked attentions. He took to escorting her to the office, which was all very well as long as the fair typist was punctual, but after a time, when she happened to miss her train, the book-keeper



"'OH, BUT I MUST SEE HIM,' SHE PROTESTED. 'I'M HIS WIFE!'"

missed his. And so one morning their employer lay in wait for the pair. He asked the delinquent to step into his private office.

"Look here, Mr. Robinson," he said, "up to now you have given satisfaction with your books; but I think you have lately begun to carry the principles of double entry too far."

The question of office hours is naturally one that is ever to the fore. "George," asked a fair typist of her friend the cashier, "what is your notion of the Ideal Life?"

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"Office hours eleven to four, with two hours for lunch and a rise every quarter," was the response.

Occasionally it is considered a drawback for a clerk to have a sense of humour. It is written of Mark Twain that he applied to a friend for a clerk.

"I know a capital young fellow who will just suit you," said his friend. "He came to see me at the office yesterday, but I had no opening for him."

"Has he a sense of humour?" asked Mark Twain.

"A sense of humour? I should say that was his strong point. He laughed heartily at two or three of my witticisms and ventured on one or two rather good ones himself."

"Then he won't do for me. I've tried that sort, and it interferes too much with work. I want a Scotchman. I can't afford to pay ten dollars a week to a young fellow just to laugh."

"Remember, young man," once observed a prince of commerce, "that in the bright lexicon of youth there is no such word as fail."

"Might I suggest, sir," timidly rejoined the new clerk, "that if such is the case it would be advisable to write to the publishers of that lexicon and call their attention to the omission?"

The first interview is always an anxious time for the prospective clerk, and one when a happy answer will often turn the scale.

"What credentials have you got?" asked the head of the firm of such an applicant.



"THE CLERK'S LIFE IS FAR FROM HUMDRUM."

"The same as are on your door, sir—'Push,'" was the reply.

On another occasion a somewhat shady employer told the applicant that his appearance and account of himself were satisfactory, but that he must return and get a "character."

The next day the applicant duly appeared.

"Well, young man, have you found your character?"

"No, sir," was the reply; "but I've found yours, and I'm not coming."

Most establishments know something of the applicant who is ready to accept any position

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"REMEMBER, YOUNG MAN, THAT IN THE BRIGHT LEXICON OF YOUTH THERE IS NO SUCH WORD AS FAIL."

—from office-boy to chief confidential clerk, or even manager.

"I'm sorry, but the clerical staff is full up."

"What about the post of office-boy?"

"Ah, I'm afraid you don't quite know enough for that."

Of course, a volume might be written on the blunders of clerks and typists. A recent one concerns a new employé of a Mincing Lane broker whose ideas of orthography were peculiar.

"I'm afraid this won't do at all. See how you've spelt sugar." He extended the dictated letter—there it was—"suggar."

"I'm sorry," said the new-comer, brightly; "it was a careless slip. I see I've left out the 'h.'"

On another occasion an employer was dictating a letter to a Russian friend: "My dear Psgolskoipselsky."

When the draft came to him, it read: "My dear Sir."

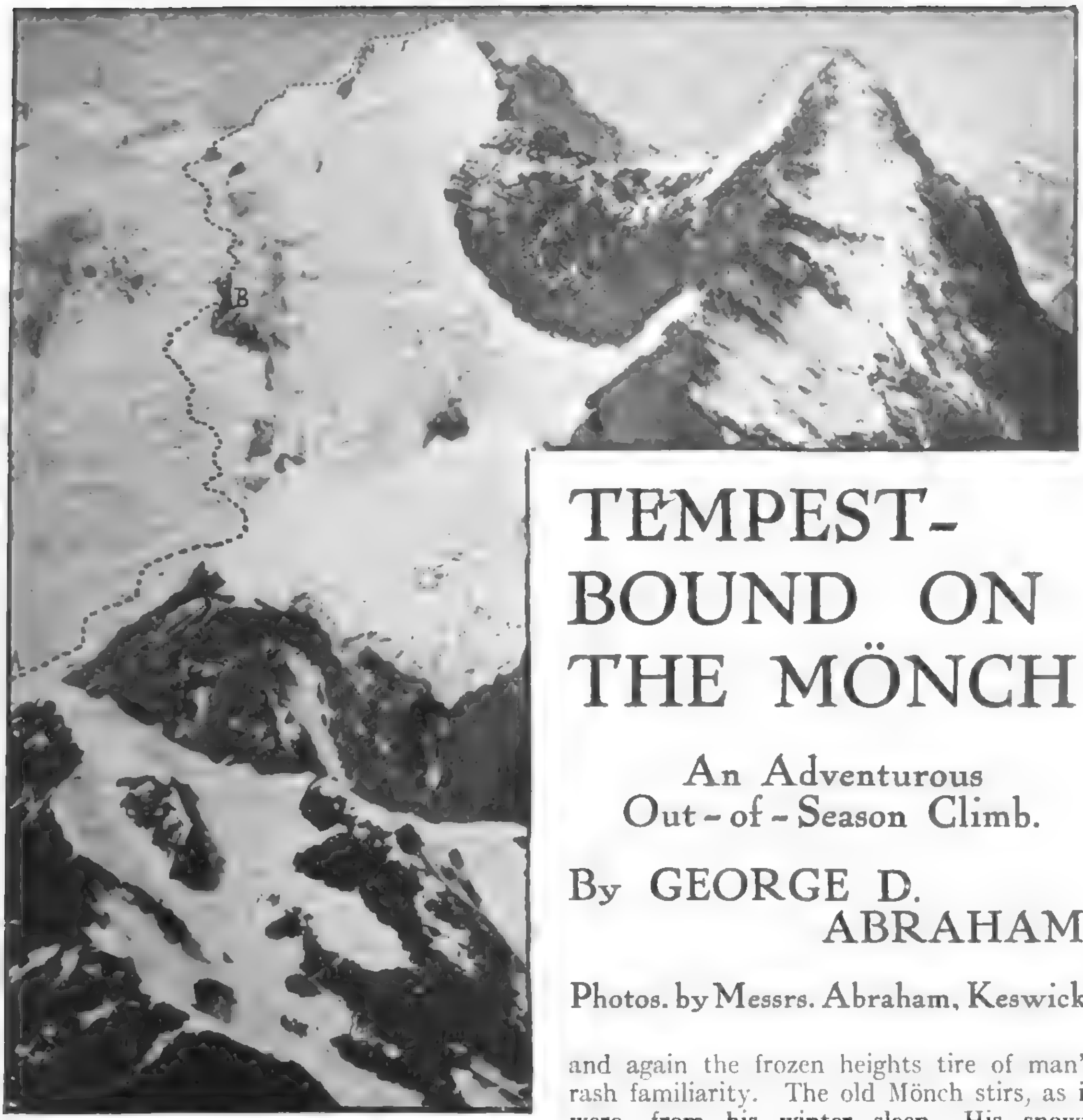
"How's this?" he asked.

"I thought it best to spare the typewriter, sir. Those Russian names are a terrible strain on the machine."

The ballad of the Clerk has been written, and it is so good that it deserves to be widely known:—

The clerk now leaves his weary desk,
And seeks the shady banks of Esk;
His ledger for a while he leaves,
Nor too disconsolately grieves
That for a fortnight he shall be
Far from the confines of "E.C."
Names lovelier he now shall meet
Than Lombard or Threadneedle Street;
Far fairer ways he shall frequent
Than paths that pass the Monument,
And gain a clearer, sweeter view
Than from Throgmorton Avenue.
Now when the cruel clock strikes ten,
He takes not up his patient pen,
Nor seeks at noon the A.B.C.
For a brief snatch of toast and tea.
At eventide he'll feast his eyes
On other slopes than Kensal Rise,
Nor *mâ* Maida Vale retreat
To his retired suburban seat,
Where the long lines of street lamps burn
Night after night on his return.
No, he shall rest his limbs, I trow,
Beside the running waters now,
Or set the rowlocks gaily singing
Down the river swiftly swinging;
Trace from the hills its gentle source,
Till in the tides it lose its course.
Across the moors he'll stride at ease,
In purple heather to the knees.
At nightfall reach the lonely inn,
And yarns with host or hostess spin.
Next day, when best he pleases, rise,
Whose day at his disposal lies;
Forgetting all—by all forgot—
For fifteen days how blest his lot!

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THE MÖNCH FROM THE TOP OF THE WETTERHORN.

The dotted line shows the route of ascent. A marks the direction of Grindelwald, which is five thousand feet lower; B is the Bergli Hut. From the hut to the summit is a height of nearly four thousand feet.

TEMPEST-BOUND ON THE MÖNCH

An Adventurous Out-of-Season Climb.

By GEORGE D. ABRAHAM.

Photos. by Messrs. Abraham, Keswick.

SORE wounded but not subdued! How well the words apply to the Mönch, that white-crested, central sentinel of the Oberland! Man has thrust his "iron way" into the very vitals of the great peak; it has shared in that disrespect which all railway-fettered mountains are prone to acquire. In three years' time man's handiwork will end in the crest of the Jungfrau.

But let it not be forgotten that conquest has come from within, not from without. Far overhead the sky-soaring rocks and icy ridges lift themselves heavenwards, as barely inaccessible as of yore. Lest we forget, now and again the frozen heights tire of man's rash familiarity. The old Mönch stirs, as it were, from his winter sleep. His snowy mantle shakes loose in early summer sunshine, and puny mortals who cling to his front are swept helplessly to their doom. Only two years ago five great guides and two of their companions in peril perished in this fashion.

My own experience of the three Oberland peaks that charm all beholders when seen from the popular view-point on the Little Scheidegg has always savoured of the adventurous. Not very long ago the Mönch gave us a cool reception, and the escapade must live in memory for a lifetime. Our party, the first of the year, by the way, to tread those summit snows, consisted of two famous guides and three amateurs.

It was an early June morning of cloudless promise as we strode out from the welcome shade of the last of the storm-shattered pines, two thousand feet above Grindelwald. Old Sol scorched us unmercifully. Two hours

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MIDST THE TREACHEROUS SNOW-HIDDEN CREVASSES ON THE WAY TO THE MÖNCH.

later the scene was utterly changed. A sudden summer storm assailed us as we traversed the lofty glacier that was to give access to the Bergli Hut, where the night had to be spent before finally tackling the Mönch next day. All were heavy laden with provisions and firewood, the latter gathered *en route*. Thus, when a terrific thunderstorm swept down upon us, it was a tardy race for shelter under a large and conveniently-placed boulder, verily "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Yet from this cover it was a fine experience to watch the *tourmente* gradually increase and spend itself amidst the vast solitudes. Lightning flashed amongst the misty crags of the Eiger; the thunder reverberated incessantly from the peaks on either hand, and then seemed to echo itself to exhaustion in the more distant snowy recesses of the Jungfrau. Gradually the mists settled down, the turmoil ceased, and a great calm pervaded the heights. Such conditions made us think of the comforts of Grindelwald. However, we were cheered by the recollection of the mountain's reputation as a "quick change artiste," and the optimist of the party carried a barometer, which, to the faithful, always seems to be going up when there is talk of going down.

Thus we donned our heavy loads again and set off in the now invigorating air across the trackless ice of the Fiescher Glacier. Slowly the vapour sank valleywards and the sun shone out on such a beautiful world of glittering whiteness that the camera was voted a most welcome and important member of the party.

Nowadays it is often asserted that landscape photography is "played out"; the *blasé* amateur is tired of country lanes and woodland dells. Let him try the marvellous opportunities which the High Alps afford; he will not at least feel *blasé* when manipulating his camera on a slippery ice-slope, with downward views meanwhile of appalling suggestiveness.

It was five hours after leaving Grindelwald before a sight was obtained of the tiny hut of

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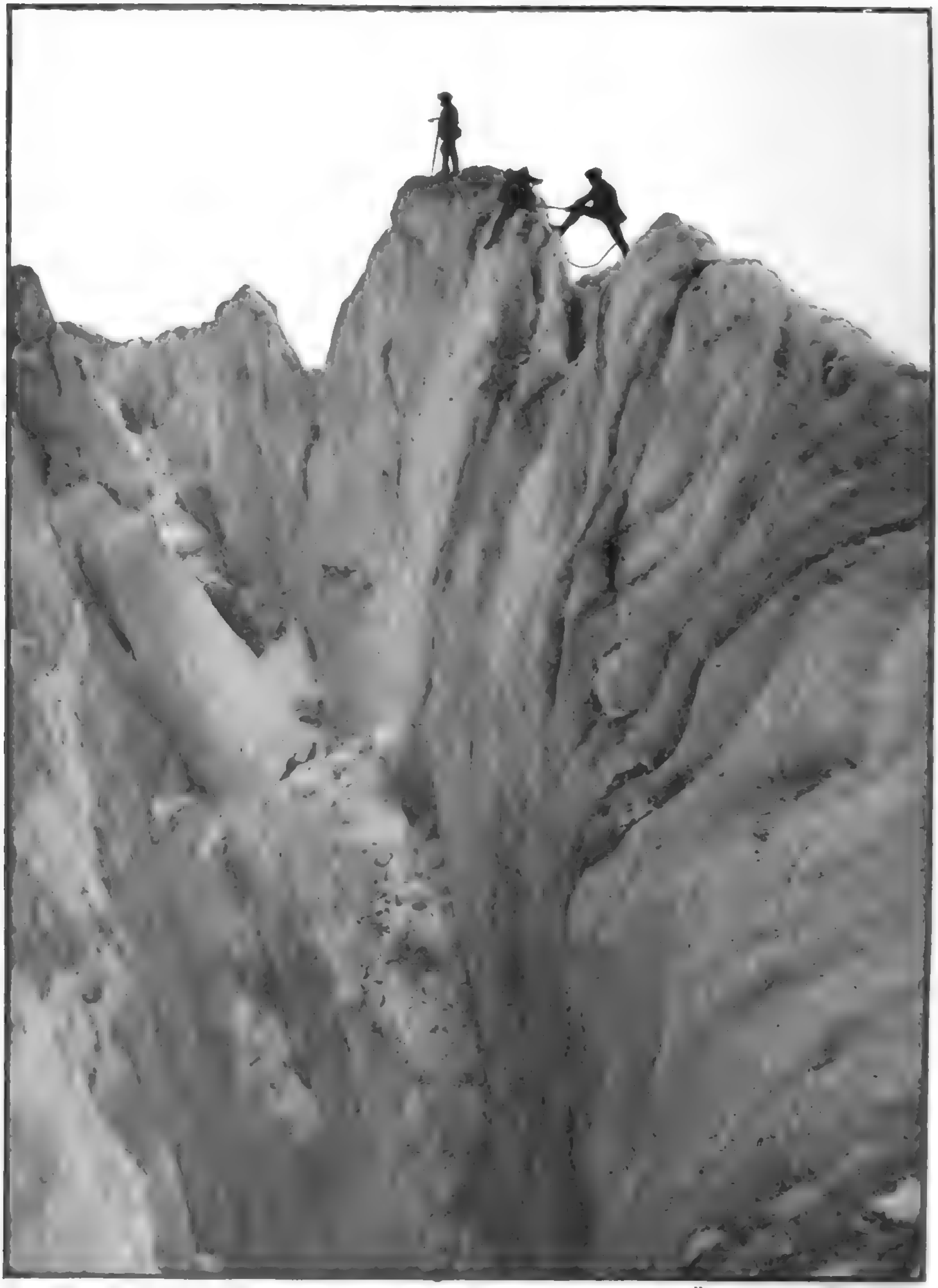
the Bergli, perched far overhead on an island of rock that thrust itself forth from one of the mightiest glacier systems in Europe. To reach its portals some difficult and dangerous work was evidently necessary. The steep ice now became uneven and twisted into the weirdest of shapes. Intricate systems of crevasses were dominated by snow-covered pinnacles glistening in the rays of the afternoon sun. The work of disintegration was strikingly obvious; ominous cracks were heard. Whilst we gazed, away up to the left a huge splinter toppled forward, broke into a thousand fragments, and crashed down with a roar towards us. Fortunately, ere it reached our level the whirling mass was caught by a tremendous crevasse and swallowed wholesale. Naught was heard but the hollow gurgle deep down in the bowels of the icy monster. It was only the presence of this great natural refuse pit, as it were, which made our passage along the dangerous slope at all justifiable. A savage rebuke came from Jossi, our guide, when the insatiable photographer suggested a halt to "take" an avalanche. A few minutes later it was evident that the avalanche would have done the "taking"; an irresistible snow-breaker leapt the big crevasses and actually obliterated our recently-made footsteps.

Then the actual climbing became exciting when the *débris* zone was



A DIFFICULT ICE-PASSAGE BELOW THE BERGLI HUT.

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From a Photo. by] "NOW, HIGH IN AIR, ACROSS SOME ICY PINNACLE." *[Tairraz*

passed. The newly-fallen snow made negotiation of the crevasses somewhat slippery. The treacherous covering had to be cleared off the ice, and big steps cut on the edge of many a vertical frozen abyss. The clatter of icy fragments hundreds of feet down in the depths made one realize that one had a life to lose.

Now we were down in the gloomy depths of some awesome crevasse, with its cold, purple, gleaming, icy walls ; anon, high in air,

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we were crawling gingerly across some slender, white snow-bridge suspended over black nothingness. Eventually a snow-slope was attained, and with startling suddenness the little hut was seen close at hand. So engrossing had been the work that an hour had passed as a minute.

It was but a cool reception we had that midsummer's evening at the Bergli. First the frozen entrance had to be forced, and then the frozen exit of the chimney thawed. Meanwhile, snow-clouds enwrapped us; the world was blotted out, and we gladly sought the welcome refuge of our little wooden hut, the loftiest of its kind in all the Swiss Alps, and nearly eleven thousand feet above the level of London. We little guessed how gladly we should leave it three days later.

The discomforts of the melting moments must not be dwelt upon. Suffice it to say that we retired to rest amidst the damp blankets and moist straw with scarcely a dry thing amongst us, except the tooth-powder brought up from Grindelwald by the æsthete of the party. The natural drying process filled the hut with clammy vapour. Yet such is Alpine health and hardihood that we awoke next morning fit for anything, and ready to try "a fall" with any mountain giant available. But the only fall that morning was that of the snow outside and our spirits inside. A peep at dawn from the tiny window of the hut revealed naught but a dense, whirling snowstorm. This lasted for two whole days.



"THEN TO BED AMONGST THE DAMP BLANKETS AND MOIST STRAW."

The cold was of course intense, but at first the time did not drag wearily. Everybody possessed musical talent of some kind or other; both chorus and principals, as well as the band, whose instruments consisted of a mouth-organ and a frying-pan, displayed great staying-powers and keenness. Various gymnastic feats furnished warmth, and games were invented. The top of the table was carefully marked out as a draughtboard, and lumps of sugar served as pieces. The blacks were made by contact with the bottom of the frying-pan, but whites ere long assumed a similar colour-scheme, and disputes arose as to the properties of the two players. The sugar had to be eaten afterwards, so the game of draughts began to pall. Moreover, the gale raging outside found its way through the old building, and draughts were doubly monotonous.

During the third day things grew more serious; the downfall was tremendous, and all around the air seemed filled with the thunder of avalanches; the frail structure quivered with the unseen danger. Only once in twenty years had the Bergli Hut been swept away by an avalanche; a one-in-twenty chance seemed to us a fair risk when an attempt to reach Grindelwald would have meant certain extinction.

At last patience was rewarded. On the evening of the third day the storm subsided; we were able to venture outside the hut and grope our way along the snow-piled, yard-wide ledge which served as veranda. The stores of food and firewood were almost exhausted. Thus after a night of hunger and cold we were glad to leave our straw beds at three o'clock next morning.

A glance outside the hut disclosed a marvellous sight. The sky overhead was quite clear, but far below in the dimness of dawn lay the lonesome glacier valleys, filled with

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"HE DISAPPEARED SUDDENLY INTO A SNOW-HIDDEN CREVASSE."

THE seething clouds. Later, when the sun tipped their edges with a golden fringe, fleecy fragments seemed to detach themselves from the main mass and rise up like ghostly beings, to fade slowly in the deep grey of the firmament. The nearer world in which we dwelt awhile seemed transformed; the black, frowning crags had vanished. It was a softly beauteous world of great alabaster cones and wondrous domes of whiteness.

Though marvellous to behold, these conditions and the lack of provisions augured ill for the success of our venture. Yet two hours later we were in the thick of the fray, now up to our knees and anon up to our waists in powdery drifts above the icy rocks of the Bergli. A cold northerly breeze seemed finally to carry us up with a run to the pass of the Mönch Joch. There shelter was found from the flying snow spiculæ. On the left the Fiescherhorn gleamed gloriously in the clear air; on the right, comparatively close at hand and far overhead, the old, storm-shriven Mönch seemed to smile down upon us in utter, icy aloofness. A long streamer of wind-driven snow trailed far away to leeward from his frosty poll; he "smoked his pipe," as the guides say. With defences storm-shielded aloft and frost-embattled below the chance of conquest seemed simply hopeless. In the midst of these monster Alps man feels almost as insignificant as he does at a meeting of suffragettes.

However, there was one weak spot in the icy armour of our peak; the fierce wind had cleared the new snow off the top of the ridge by which the attack must be made. This we saw on closer approach. In fact, one of the party was so intent on the upward gaze that he forgot the old Scriptural motto of the glacier-wanderer, "Look ye, therefore, carefully how ye walk." In other words, he disappeared suddenly into a snow-hidden crevasse. Only an opportune pull on the rope prevented a protracted interview with the interior of the "Everlasting Snowfield," as this great glacier between the Mönch and Jungfrau is called.

At last the huge brown rocks were close at hand, as well as foot. What mattered the roar of the storm overhead! Up and up we went on the bare crest of the ridge, at times clinging almost lovingly to some engrossing section, where we hung apparently in mid-air on holds of full sufficiency, with prospect wide and wonderfully deep; or again struggling

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keenly with the hidden inward intricacies of some snow-choked chimney or crack. Then came an exciting moment when the leader dislodged a loose rock to whiz inch-wide of the ear of someone below. How the "tail of the rope" in the form of a human tongue wagged vociferously when under fire a second time! However, such little mishaps only added enjoyment—especially to those not directly concerned.

Ere long the rocks were passed, and high up on the ridge-pole of the peak the gale flung itself upon us. The position was exciting in the extreme. A delicate knife-edge-like ridge of hard, wind-driven snow stretched across, about forty yards in length, to the icy front of our mountain. We had to make our way along the sharp crest, with the body carefully finding the balance at every step. There was no need to counsel steadiness. The downward prospect of a cloud-filled abyss on either hand beyond either foot sufficiently revealed the results of momentary carelessness. Fortunately the gale swept quite steadily across from the right, and as I stepped deliberately along the knife-edge in the steps of those ahead it was curious to notice how their bodies leant far over the abyss to windward. It appeared as though a sudden lull in the wind would result in a drop into the nether world for the whole party. Luckily the aerial balancing ended successfully, and a comfortable ledge allowed momentary rest. Here some dry bread and frozen chicken, practically the last of our provisions, were disposed of, and some sour wine braced us for the work ahead.

Truly it was work indeed. Specially so for Jossi, the leading guide, who for over two hours hacked and hewed with his ice-axe at that gale-swept slope. The angle of the ice must have been nearly sixty degrees, and it was a fine sight to see such a master of craft, with perfect balance and steady swing, carefully cutting each step in the icy staircase. The rest of us shivered with cold. At last one at a time we followed upwards, the rope held firmly meanwhile by the man in front.

I well remember my own experience at this point. My ice-axe had lost part of its head in a rocky niche lower down; it was useless and had to be left behind. Some snow plastered on the ice-buttress gave footing to those in front, but the frail support had almost gone. In the act of stepping across and upward, the wind suddenly whirled me off my balance. There was a wild plunge for the foothold; it collapsed, and I toppled over the depths—

> Where slip or fall brings
> Swiftly-crashing end

Fortunately those above were prepared, and their hold of the trusty rope prevented a record descent of the four-thousand-foot face of the Mönch. It was an eerie sensation, but, seizing courage in both hands and the rope in the other, it was possible to assist in my uplifting to the safe steps in the ice-wall. Then, re-united, we went on our way rejoicing. Steps were cut in many an icy bulge until finally the great tapering tip of our mountain afforded an easy, yet dangerous, finish. Through the surging mist great eaves of corniced snow were just visible on the right, overhanging the precipice above the Bergli Hut, now almost four thousand feet below.

A sudden realization of their presence was vouchsafed us. With an ominous grunt the old Mönch seemed to settle down under our weight; it was the work of a desperate instant to spring backward to the left to the solid part of our mountain. With a roar the storm hurried us onwards, its shrill shriek, as we crawled finally on to the summit, arousing sinister memories of great climbers flung to their doom by the collapse of those treacherous cornices.

On the side of the peak facing the Little Scheidegg there was comparative calm, and for a few moments we lingered, tasting the joys of conquest. Below us a fragile ridge of snow dipped over into vaporous nothingness; overhead flashed momentary glimpses of blue sky.

Memory involuntarily carried us back to a distant day of sunny summit calm, when peaks a hundred miles away had stood forth clear and bright, and even the far-away "tripperish" turmoil on the Little Scheidegg was fair to see. We had sat poring over the infinite void and filling a more finite one from a full rücksack. Now there was neither prospect nor provender. The empty thought made us hurry back over the storm-swept summit. There were only half-a-dozen raisins and ten thousand feet of mountain between us and Grindelwald.

Down, and ever down, we went, every nerve alive and every muscle strained in battle with the *tourmente* and the greedy grip of gravitation. Luckily the wind had veered somewhat, and, thanks to much enlargement, the steps in the dangerous ice-buttress had assumed the dimensions of "Wappin' Old Stairs" ere the last man's turn came to descend the *mauvais pas*.

An hour and a half later we stood on the Mönch Joch, gazing down on the roof of our erstwhile home. A thick pall of clouds filled the valley; lightning flickered weirdly

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THE SNOW-CORNICED CREST OF THE MÖNCH — GREAT CLIMBERS HAVE BEEN FLUNG TO THEIR DOOM BY THE BREAKAGE OF THE OVERHANGING MASSES.

midst the swaying masses, and discomforting sounds of thunder echoed upwards into the heights. Yet now, above and around us venturous mortals, was pleasant sunshine.

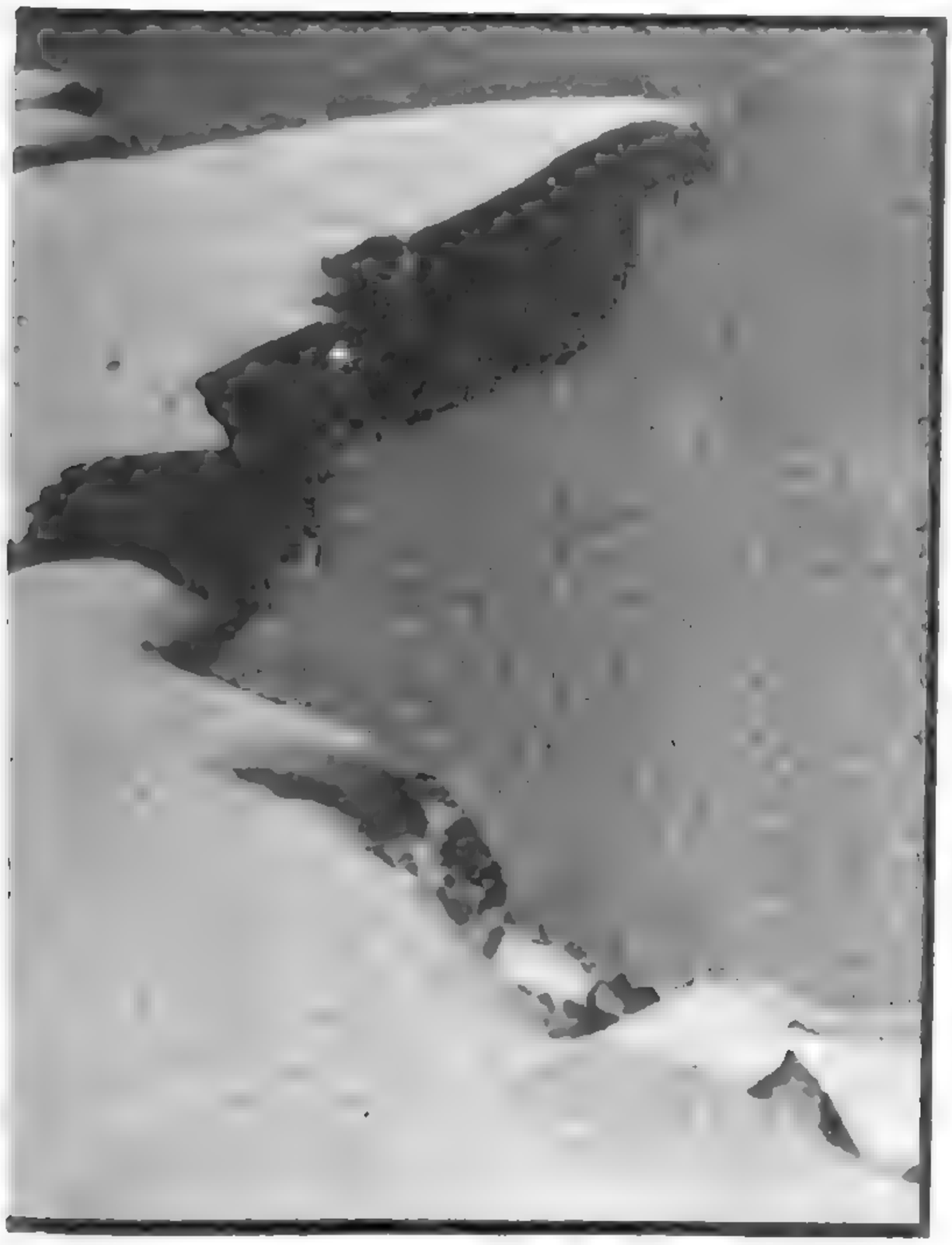
Nevertheless, even this had its drawback; the new snow was peeling off the snowy breast of the Mönch—the warmth had roused the avalanche fiend once more. In front of the Bergli Hut we packed up our luggage and discussed the question as to the safety of descending the *débris*-swept slopes that separated us from the main glacier valley and Grindelwald.

"Is it safe?" we anxiously asked of Jossi.

At that very moment the answer came with terrible suddenness from the slopes of the Fiescherhorn. A broad stream of snow crashed in a seething mass down and across the actual route we should have to follow. To be caught by such a relentless foe meant certain destruction. The only reasonable plan was to wait until the cool air of the evening should congeal the upper snows and hold them firm. Thus we tightened our ropes and endured some hours of hungry, patient waiting.

Nothing of any moment had fallen for two hours, so we decided to trust to Providence and swift legs to carry us through. A few minutes brought us to the edge of the steep

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slopes; the maze of crevasses was passed, and downwards we dashed over the furrowed snow-slope.

"Faster! faster!" shouted our leader, as we hurried forwards, slipping, scrambling, stumbling, tumbling, and oft-times glancing nervously backwards and upwards at the overhanging snow-doom.

Nerve-racking, hissing, crashing sounds were heard now and again. But nothing fell in our direction, and after half an hour of extreme excitement we were out of range of the dreaded mountain artillery. A long glissade down the steep slopes brought us to level glacier. There we flung ourselves on the snow and moralized as to the safety or otherwise of mountaineering.

Three hours later we were literally wading through the rain-clouds that overhung Grindelwald, and on reaching civilization we found that a terrific thunderstorm and deluge had swept the valley. The mention of sunshine up aloft was received with incredulity, and not for days could the natives realize that the first great climb of the season had been made. Yet the Mönch was ours. His gruff welcome and the savage struggle for supremacy are a pleasant memory. May we meet again!



"WE HURRIED FORWARDS, SLIPPING, SCRAMBLING, STUMBLING, TUMBLING."

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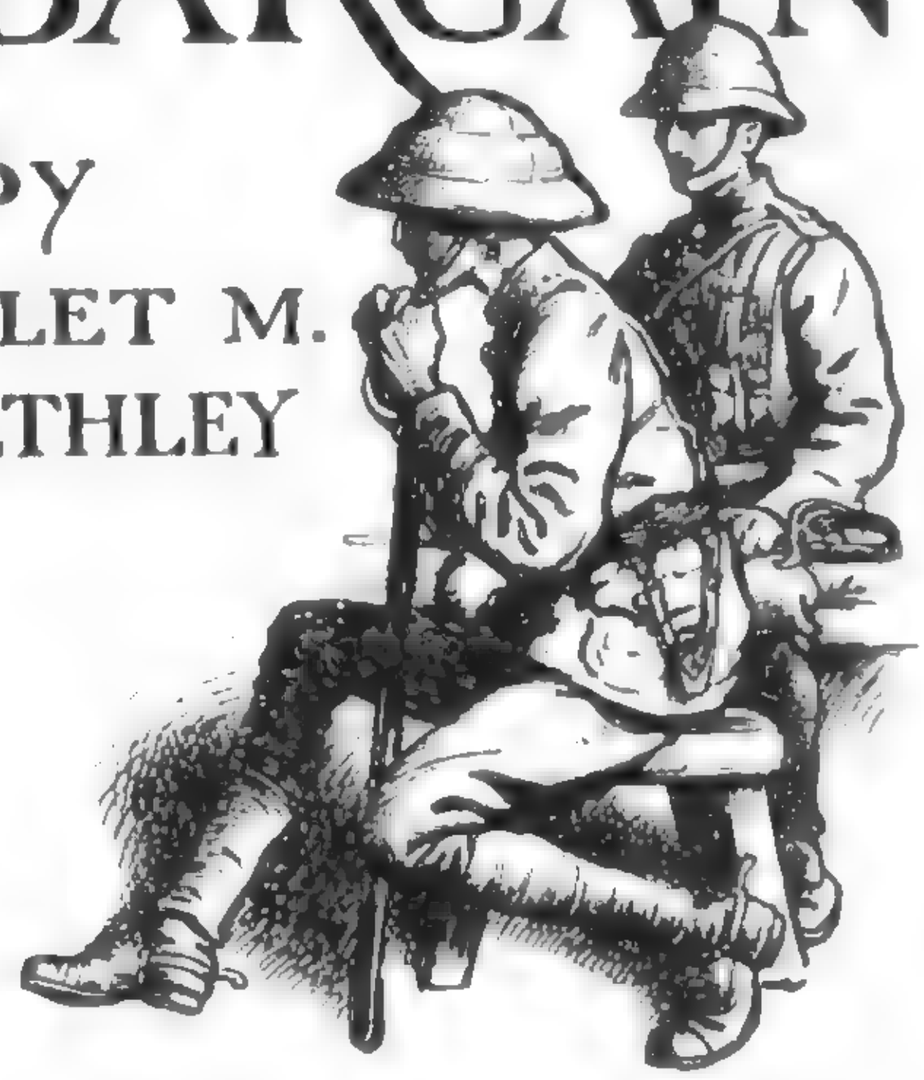
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THE BARGAIN

by

VIOLET M. METHLEY



Illustrated by Byam Shaw.

"AND that's still your decision, sir?"

"Yes."

Prescott brought his hand down heavily upon the table.

"Then all that I can say is that you're committing wilful murder!"

The Major made no answer, but Freeston looked up sharply.

"Prescott, you can't know what you're saying!"

"Don't I? What about your wife?"

Freeston opened his mouth to answer, but broke off with an oath.

"Good Lord, man, try and be reasonable." It was the fourth man present who spoke. "There's no sense in using such a word as 'murder.'"

"Isn't there, doctor? How about your kids?"

But Dr. Burns went on feverishly:—

"That's not the question. We're here to discuss—to come to some decision——"

"Oh, the Major's done all that part of it," said Prescott, bitterly.

Marcus Kenyon rose to his feet, leaning heavily on the edge of the table.

On his face, on that of Captain Prescott, as he paced up and down like a caged wild beast, on Freeston's boyish features, and those of the sallow, middle-aged doctor, there was the same imprint—that of starvation. It showed in the hollowed eyes, in the prominent bones of forehead and cheek, in the drawn, colourless lips; it stamped the impress of tragedy on every word and gesture.

"Do you want me to go through all my arguments again?" The Major's voice was dull and toneless. "Before the Colonel died he made me promise that I'd hold out. He knew as well as I do what we might expect from Razim Abbas—death for the men, and for the women——"

"And what is there to hope for on the other hand?"

"Why, death—for *all* of us—unless we are relieved."

"Oh, don't pretend that you still anticipate that, sir!"

"Surely we might come to terms somehow."

"What terms, Freeston? We've no hold over Razim, no power to insist upon anything, and he must be very well aware of that. He'll make no promises. We're to surrender unconditionally, trusting to his mercy. You remember Foster relied on the good faith of the tribesmen, and what was the result? There were no women concerned there, either. You can find plenty of other instances."

"Only, unfortunately, this isn't the time to study historical treatises," sneered Prescott. "The trouble is, sir, you've only yourself to consider. D'you suppose that any one of us would mind dying himself—even

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of hunger? It's when a man has to watch his wife growing weaker each day. Hettie could walk yesterday; this morning she can't stand."

"Good God, Prescott, don't make it impossible for me to hold out!"

"That's what I'm trying to do. It's because you've no woman here to care for that you can talk of holding out."

Something like a smile crossed Kenyon's haggard face.

"And what if I gave way?" he said, quietly. "When they shot you down, would the knowledge that your wife was alive make things easier?"

Dr. Burns rose wearily to his feet.

"We're doing no good here, Major—just arguing in a circle. I'm off to the hospital."

He crossed the room with a heavy, dragging step, followed by Freeston. Prescott hesitated for an instant, facing Kenyon across the table.

"You'll drive us into doing something desperate," he said, abruptly. "We shall have to take matters into our own hands."

"You mean that you'll oppose my authority—mutiny?"

"Words like those don't frighten men in our position. Yes, mutiny, if you like, and come to some terms with Razim. By Heaven, I'm beginning to think that I'd as soon trust to his tender mercies as yours."

He turned on his heel, and the angry words died unspoken on Kenyon's lips before the misery in the young fellow's wan face.

As Prescott's footsteps died away the commander of the little garrison bowed his head on his crossed arms and remained motionless, face to face with a new peril. He stood alone in his opinion; if, as Prescott threatened, it came to a question of force—but somehow that must be avoided, somehow a way of escape must be found, other than the broad and obvious path of unconditional surrender.

A light step brought Kenyon to his feet, his forehead darkly flushed by the pressure of his hands. A tall girl stood there, in a black dress which perhaps made her appear even thinner than she really was. Her skin had a strange, silvery pallor, and the look in her eyes made the Major turn away abruptly.

"I thought that Dr. Burns was here," she said, gravely.

"He was a little while ago. He went to the hospital."

"I must have just missed him, then. One of the children is dying, I am afraid—his own little boy."

Kenyon did not answer, but his hand, resting upon the table, clenched convulsively.

"Major Kenyon——" Audrey Heriot took a step towards him, and spoke in a low, husky voice. "It—it can't go on—you must give in. Oh, I know that father agreed with you—that he made you promise not to trust Razim Abbas without guarantees; but he died before all this came. Anything—anything would be better than to see the little children suffering like this."

"I thought that Prescott's argument to bring me to reason was pretty strong," said Kenyon, wearily.

"What was that?"

"He threatens to use force if I don't give in quietly. And now you come. You know very well that I'd do anything rather than see you suffer, and for that reason I won't surrender."

"But is it quite impossible to make conditions? Major Kenyon, there is something I have been thinking about. I dare say I'm quite wrong; I know very little about it, but father used to tell me about a secret hiding-place in this fort, where Seer Ali's treasure was concealed."

"Well?"

"You know of it, too, don't you?"

"Yes. The old man showed it to the Colonel and me, when he gave up the fort."

"You're the only one now who knows exactly where it is—this hiding-place."

"I believe so; but——"

"Wait; this is what I thought. Couldn't you bribe Razim with the treasure? It must be very valuable, and they say he is so covetous. Surely he would swear to let us go safely if you showed him the hiding-place."

"Let me think, Miss Heriot." Kenyon strode abruptly to the window. He stood there for a long time motionless, his back to the girl, then turned to her with a curious expression on his face.

"I believe you've found the way that we've all been looking for," he said, slowly. "The way to buy terms from Razim. Anyhow, I shall try your plan at once—and thank you, Miss Heriot."

"If only I could help you!" said the girl, earnestly. "Don't think that I haven't known how hard it has been for you." She hesitated, and then went on bravely, but with her pale cheeks hotly flushed. "Major Kenyon, I want to tell you something. At ordinary times I wouldn't, but now—it's different. I couldn't give you the answer you wanted a little while ago. I don't think

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that I understood myself. Anyhow, if—if you cared to ask the same question again, my—my reply would not be the same."

For an instant the Major's face was transformed; then the light passed away, leaving it grave and weary as before. He spoke very gently, his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Miss Heriot, don't think that I underestimate the honour you do me, or that I have changed. But just at this moment I have no right to ask that question again. It would be utterly wrong and dishonourable."

"I don't quite understand how," Audrey said, very softly.

"No? Well, that is how it seems to me. So—may I leave it, in the hope that another chance may come?"

He turned, without waiting for her answer, and took his cap from the table; then, still without speaking, left the room and went in search of Freeston.

The young man was standing with Prescott in an embrasure of the wall. As the Major approached the two fell into an uneasy silence.

"Freeston, I want you and Sergeant Evans to come with me out to Razim's camp," said Kenyon, abruptly. "I've a proposal to make to him. Prescott, you're in charge here while I'm away."

Ten minutes later the heavy gates of the fort closed behind the three men. They walked in the direction of the enemy's camp, Sergeant Evans carrying a white flag of truce upon his bayonet's point.

Razim Abbas received them without hesitation. He made an imposing figure against the background of his dark-hued tent, with his men gathered round him in grim and warlike array. Kenyon seated himself on a wooden stool near the chief. His hand rested on his sword-hilt, and his bearing was quiet and assured; yet the signs of starvation cannot be altogether hidden, and Razim's evil black eyes scanned the faces of the Englishmen with ill-concealed triumph.

"I have a proposal to make to you, Razim Abbas," said the Major, cutting short the elaborate preliminary courtesies. "A proposal greatly to your advantage."

"Ah!" The dark face was immovable. "I will hear it willingly. Say on."

"You have heard of the treasure of Seer Ali?"

The abrupt question appeared to startle even the imperturbable native. He glanced quickly at Kenyon before answering, and there was a glint of excitement in his eyes.

"I have heard of it—yes."

"Had you heard also"—Kenyon leant forward and spoke slowly and impressively—"that it was concealed in a secret hiding-place in this fortress, very hard to find, and known only to a few?"

There was a moment's silence, then Razim replied quietly:—

"I had heard that also."

"That is well. Listen, Razim Abbas. That secret place where the hoard was concealed Seer Ali made known to two men only—myself and Heriot Sahib, since dead. Now I alone remain, for *you* do not know the hiding-place, Razim Abbas."

The tribesman made no sign either of affirmation or denial. Kenyon continued, very quietly:—

"A man might seek for months and still fail to find the place of the treasure. But all that is already well known to you by hearsay. Well, this is my proposal. If you agree to certain conditions I will show you the hiding-place."

Again the hungry glitter gleamed in the other's eyes. Kenyon waited, with difficulty concealing his anxiety. He had guessed that Razim knew of Seer Ali's hoard—rightly guessed, too, that he would give much to learn where it was concealed.

At last the native spoke, stroking his beard thoughtfully.

"It seems good to me that we should bargain together, you and I, regarding this matter. What are your conditions?"

There was another long pause. Kenyon never stirred; he sat quiet and impassive, staring before him, until at last he spoke.

"This is what I ask: To-night you must send my people food, sufficient that all may eat. To-morrow at daybreak all in the fortress, men and women and children, must be suffered to depart unharmed, and with their arms upon them, so that, if necessary, they may defend themselves. I alone will remain with you, and when I have certain knowledge of the safety of the garrison, I will show you the hiding-place of the treasure."

"And why will you not reveal this secret before they depart?" asked Razim. "So that you also might go with them?"

"I have told you my conditions," said Kenyon, wearily. "I will show you nothing until all are in safety. At the entrance to the valley, just as you reach the plain, there is a rocky hill. From thence they shall signal to me if all is well. Then, and not till then, I will take you to the hiding-place."

"You do not trust me?"

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Kenyon shrugged his shoulders.

"That is as may be, Razim Abbas."

"And how can I be assured that you know this hiding-place?"

"Should I otherwise trust myself in your hands? I will swear to you that I know it, by whatever oath you please."

"Well——" The chief spoke with sudden decision. "It is a rich treasure, men say, and the lives of these men are worthless to me. All shall be as you have spoken. We will send food now, and to-morrow at dawn all save you shall depart unharmed."

"It is agreed."

Kenyon rose to his feet, but suddenly Freeston interposed.

"There's one thing you haven't settled, sir," he said, eagerly. "When Razim Abbas has learnt all he wants, what about you?"

"Oh, I thought that went without saying," Kenyon answered, quietly. "When, as you say, he has got all he wants, I'm to go free. Is that understood, Razim Abbas?"

The chief bowed with grave dignity.

"It is understood. When Kenyon Sahib has fulfilled his part of the bargain I will do likewise, and he shall be suffered to depart freely. I will swear it."

He beckoned to an attendant, and commanded bread and salt to be brought, on which he took a solemn oath. Kenyon gravely followed his example.

"I swear," he said, "that, when I have received the signal from my companions, I will show you the hiding-place of the treasure."

After this ceremony was accomplished the Englishmen set out to return to the fort. As soon as they were out of earshot of the camp Freeston broke out excitedly.

"By Jove, sir, you've found the way out of the difficulty and saved all our lives, I do believe. You've got him tied and bound. But, my word, you've kept this business of the treasure pretty dark."

Strenuous hours followed, which left no time for doubt or thought. Their overpowering need and its satisfaction occupied the little garrison exclusively. The provisions were duly brought to the gates by a dozen wild-looking brigands, and the meal which followed was one not soon to be forgotten.

The Major's grave face softened as he watched the colour of life slowly creeping back into the wan face of the doctor's starving baby, as he saw Mrs. Prescott able once more to stand and walk. He showed himself both gentle and expert in preventing the famished little ones from eating too much or too fast, in exercising the same restraint over the invalids in the hospital.

And at last, when all were satisfied, the most part of the little garrison lay down to sleep. Only the sentries watched on the ramparts, and Kenyon paced to and fro, all through the night.

In the unreal grey light of early dawn the gates of the fort were opened and the garrison began slowly to pass out. It was a pitiful sight enough, in spite of the welcome meal overnight. Even those who counted themselves strong and well would have seemed to a spectator like men but just recovering from some dire sickness.

They was little attempt at regularity or military formation as they marched out. How indeed was it possible, since those who were strongest must help to bear the litters on which lay their sick comrades, or carry the weak, tottering children?

At the moment when the heavy gates swung back Kenyon saw some half-dozen tribesmen advancing, monstrously large in the mist. There was no need to ask for the reason of their presence; they were sent to see that he did not escape—to remind him that he was a prisoner until the bargain was fulfilled.

Prescott and Freeston, both grave and burdened with the sense of coming responsibility, joined him in the gateway to receive his final instructions.

"When you reach the entrance to the valley you're really comparatively safe. There is no cover for sharpshooters in the plain between there and Barabad. Heliograph to me from that rocky hillock, which I can see from the ramparts. You ought to be there before noon. When I've had your signal I'll show Razim Abbas the hiding-place."

"And then he'll let you go?"

"Yes."

"So, if all goes well with us, we're sure to see you before long?"

"I hope so. Well, you'd best be off now. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, sir. I say, I don't half like leaving you."

"Oh, that's all right, Freeston," said Kenyon, carelessly. "It's the only thing to do. Good-bye, Prescott."

"Good-bye, sir." The young man lingered after his companion had gone, and spoke with his eyes fixed on the ground. "What I said to you yesterday—— You'll make allowances?"

"I shall never think of it again, Prescott."

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"Thanks, sir. I—I—thanks."

It was past noon. The sun beat down intolerably upon the little fort, danced and shimmered amongst the rocks of the valley and over the distant plain.

Kenyon leant against the ramparts of the tower, his field-glasses in his hand. He felt exhausted, sick with the heat and suspense; for surely by now he should have received the signal; surely, if all had gone well, his comrades must before this have reached the entrance of the valley. And what if things were not well with them?

Razim Abbas standing near by in a patch of shade spoke harshly and with no waste of courtesy.

"Have you not received your message, Englishman?"

"No," answered Kenyon, hoarsely. "I have not received it."



"IN THE UNREAL GREY LIGHT OF EARLY DAWN THE GATES OF THE FORT WERE OPENED AND THE GARRISON BEGAN SLOWLY TO PASS OUT."

"Listen to me, then." The other came a step nearer, his black eyes gleaming. "I'll have no treachery."

"I say the same. I will have no treachery, and, therefore—you must wait."

Again Kenyon lifted the glasses to his

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eyes with hands that shook uncontrollably. Had it been in vain, then, all his plans and schemings—just so much wasted breath?

Suddenly there came a flash from the distant rocky hill, and another, and another. Long—short—long—long—Kenyon counted them almost mechanically.

In sharp, staccato fashion the words spelled themselves out: "Safe. No attack. All well."

Again and again the sentence was repeated. Then, after a pause, a further message:—

"Troops advancing from Barabad. Shall join them."

Very slowly Kenyon lowered the glasses, until his hands rested on the burning wall. So the relief column was on its way. If they had waited twelve hours longer all would have been well. As he stared out over the heat-blurred valley a look of weary despair gathered in his eyes. It was Razim Abbas's voice that recalled him to his surroundings.

"You have received the message?"

"Yes."

"You are ready, then, to complete our bargain?"

"I am ready."

Kenyon turned and followed his captors down the winding stairway.

On the road which wound through the parched plain outside the little frontier town of Barabad, the exhausted, foot-weary garrison of the fort met the troops which had been dispatched for their relief.

"I'm uncommonly glad to see you." The Colonel leant down from his horse to grasp Prescott's hand. "Though how you managed to outwit Razim Abbas I can't imagine. He's just about the most treacherous devil within a thousand miles. Why did he let you go—that's what I want to know?"

"The Major happened to be able to make conditions," answered Prescott.

"Oh, it's easy enough to *make* 'em; it's the keeping to them that's usually the bother."

"Razim had a good deal at stake, and he knew that he wouldn't get it if he didn't keep to his share of the bargain."

"How do you mean?"

"Like this. You've heard of Seer Ali's treasure?"

"Good Lord, yes. I probably know more about it than most people."

"Well, the Major knew where it was hidden in the fort."

"Yes, of course. Kenyon was in the job."

"And so he bargained with Razim Abbas that if he'd let the whole garrison clear out he'd show him the hiding-place of this precious treasure."

"Great heavens! he did that?"

"Yes. I say, you don't blame him, sir? It was a case of the lives of all of us against the money."

"Blame him! It's not that. Why, man, the treasure wasn't there—and Kenyon knew it!"

"Not there!"

"No; it was removed under escort to Paretta six months ago. I was one who went, and Kenyon himself gave it over to me."

There was a moment of dead silence. Then Freeston began to speak wildly and inconsequently.

"He always said—he always said—— It was the hiding-place, not the treasure, he swore to show them. Don't you remember?"

"And he's shown Razim the hiding-place by now," Prescott said, with dry lips. "When he saw our signal——"

"And when the treasure wasn't found there—— My God, they will have killed him!"

"I'm afraid not," said the Colonel, gravely.

"You mean——"

"I mean that's about the best we can hope for. Razim and his breed don't kill outright. Come along, men; push on!"

Sunset tinged the whitewashed buildings of Barabad to rose-pink. At a window in the Colonel's quarters sat Audrey Heriot—waiting.

It was nearly three weeks since those moments on the sun-baked road outside the town when the girl had learnt the truth, had realized that, through her innocent fault, Kenyon had remained to face what seemed certain death, or worse, in the hands of his enemies.

Much had come to pass since then. First had followed days of torturing suspense, seeming each like an eternity of sickening uncertainty. And then one morning the Colonel's wife had brought Audrey a message from her husband.

"Fort re-taken. Razim and his men dispersed. Kenyon safe."

That was all, yet it was enough, and more than enough.

And now the time of waiting which had followed that brief message was nearly at an end. Some of the troops, with Kenyon

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amongst them, were to return from the hills that day.

The thud of hoofs sounded from the road. A small body of horsemen rode in through the barrack gates. Audrey saw one man, and one man only—Marcus Kenyon, riding beside the Colonel.

Safe? Yes, there was no doubt that he was safe. He sat erect and straight in his saddle, and his face, beneath the shadow of the helmet, was no paler or thinner than its wont.

The little troop passed out of sight round the angle of the building. Audrey could hear the bustle of dismounting, and the jingle of accoutrements as the horses were led away. The girl sat motionless, waiting. He would come soon; she knew it—come to ask her that question once more which she so longed to hear. At any moment his step might sound in the corridor.

He did not come. The glow in the west died out and the room grew dark, but still the girl waited. An hour, two hours passed, and then Audrey started to her feet, a sudden sense of shame turning her cold with misery. He did not care, then—he did not mean to come to her.

With burning cheeks the girl passed from the room. Nobody must guess how she was suffering—he himself least of all. The Colonel's wife would be expecting her in the drawing-room. She would go at once.

The long room was a patchwork of silver moonlight and ebony shadow when Audrey entered. A dark figure started up from a low chair as the girl appeared in the doorway, silhouetted against the lighted corridor.

"Is that you, Miss Heriot?"

It was Kenyon's voice, sounding oddly strained and unnatural.

"Yes." Audrey tried to gain command of herself. "I—I—you quite startled me." She came farther into the room and spoke very gently and earnestly. "I'm glad to find you here. I want so much to hear how you escaped unhurt. I—I can't tell you what a relief it was to me to hear the news. I have suffered a great deal since I heard that you—that you were in such awful danger—through my fault."

"No, no; you mustn't ever think that."

"How did you get away?"

"Why, when I got Freeston's signal I showed Razim the hiding-place. As you know, the treasure wasn't there, and he was, very naturally, annoyed. I fully expected that he would shoot me then and there, but—he didn't, as you see."

"No, thank Heaven! What happened next?"

"Oh, nothing particular. Before he had time to settle my fate the alarm was given that the relief column was coming. Razim and his men took flight, leaving me behind them—and here I am."

A short silence followed, then Kenyon spoke again.

"I'd better take this opportunity, Miss Heriot, to say good-bye to you."

His tone was grave and constrained, and he stood erect, a dark silhouette against the moonlit window. Audrey tried desperately to speak naturally.

"You are going away?"

"Yes. I leave for Paretta to-morrow morning early."

Audrey fought back a wild impulse to break away, to fly from the room. Then suddenly it seemed to her that a new instinct woke in her, the fighting instinct. It was her life's happiness that was at stake—no less.

"Then you have nothing more to say to me than that?"

The words sprang from her lips almost involuntarily. She saw Kenyon wince, and there was keen pain in his voice as he answered.

"Ah, don't, Miss Heriot, don't! It's not that I've forgotten your—your permission."

"Then——"

Audrey left her sentence unfinished.

"Because I must not!" Kenyon answered her unspoken question. "If it was dishonourable then, it would be a thousand times more so now."

"Why?" Audrey spoke very quietly. "Of course, I understand why you did not speak before. But now—when you have escaped unhurt——"

"Ah!" The sound was like a groan.

Audrey took a step forward.

"Major Kenyon," she said, almost under her breath, "I can't help what you think of me. I—I believe that you—love me, and, if so, what can come between us?"

For a minute Kenyon stood immovable. Then suddenly he stepped forward and faced her, in the full flood of moonlight.

"I thought I could keep it from you. I'd made them all promise," he said, hoarsely, "but I see it's impossible. Look! Can I marry you?"

The unearthly light shone full on his face, and a little sob of pity broke from Audrey's lips. For it was as though a red-hot hand

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"'AH, DID YOU THINK IT WOULD MATTER, DEAREST—DEAREST?' SHE WHISPERED. 'I LOVE YOU, MARCUS—I LOVE YOU.'"

had been laid upon his forehead, searing the skin to whiteness. And the lids were closed over his eyes, from which the light was gone for ever.

Not for an instant did Audrey hesitate. She was beside him, drawing his face down to hers.

"Ah, did you think it would matter, dearest—dearest?" she whispered. "I love you, Marcus—I love you."

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PERPLEXITIES.

With Some Easy Puzzles for Beginners. By Henry E. Dudeney.

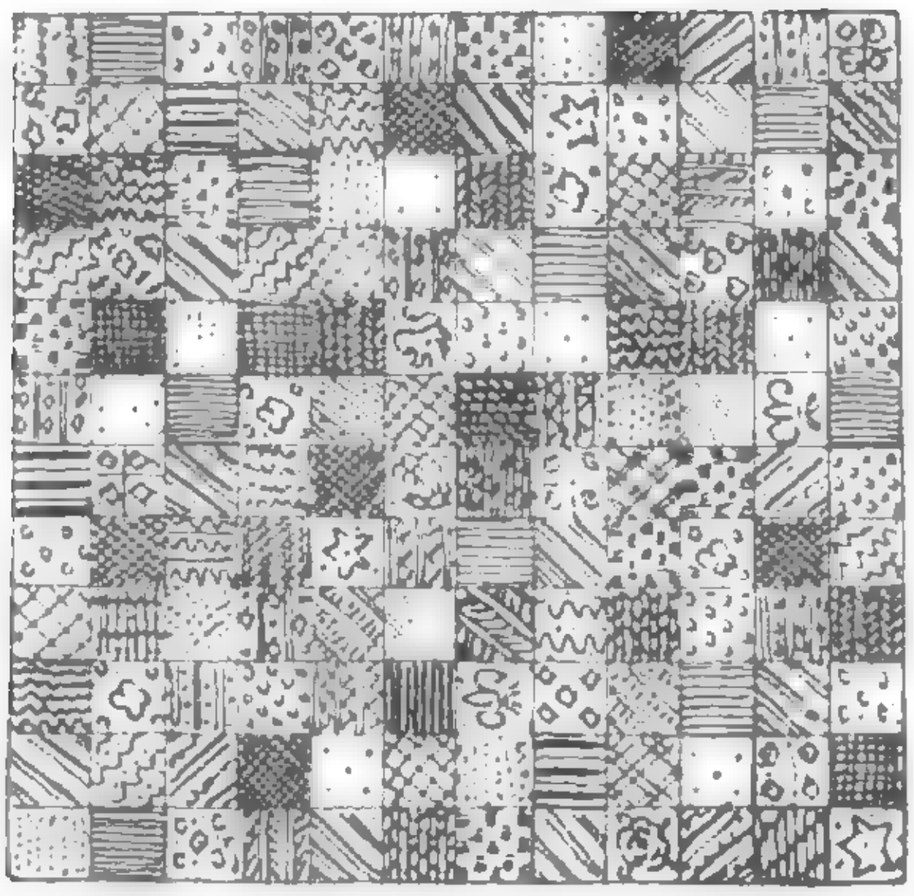
123.—CROSSING THE RIVER.

DURING a Turkish stampede in Thrace recently, a small detachment found itself confronted by a wide and deep river. However, they discovered a boat in which two children were rowing about. It was so small that it would only carry the two children, or one grown person. How did the officer get himself and his 357 soldiers across the river and leave the two children finally in joint possession of their boat? And how many times need the boat pass from shore to shore?

124.—A PATCHWORK PUZZLE.

HERE is a puzzle that should appeal to our lady readers, though it is quite possible that some of them may seek the assistance of mere man for a correct solution. A lady was presented last Christmas, by two of her girl friends, with the pretty pieces of silk patchwork shown in our illustration. It will be seen that both pieces are made up of squares all of the same size—one 12 by 12 and the other 5 by 5. She proposes to join them together and





make one square patchwork quilt, 13 by 13, but, of course, she will not cut any of the material—merely cut the stitches where necessary and join together again. What perplexes her is this. A friend assures her that there need be no more than four pieces to join up for the new quilt. Could you show her how this little needlework puzzle is to be solved in so few pieces?

125.—AN ENIGMA.

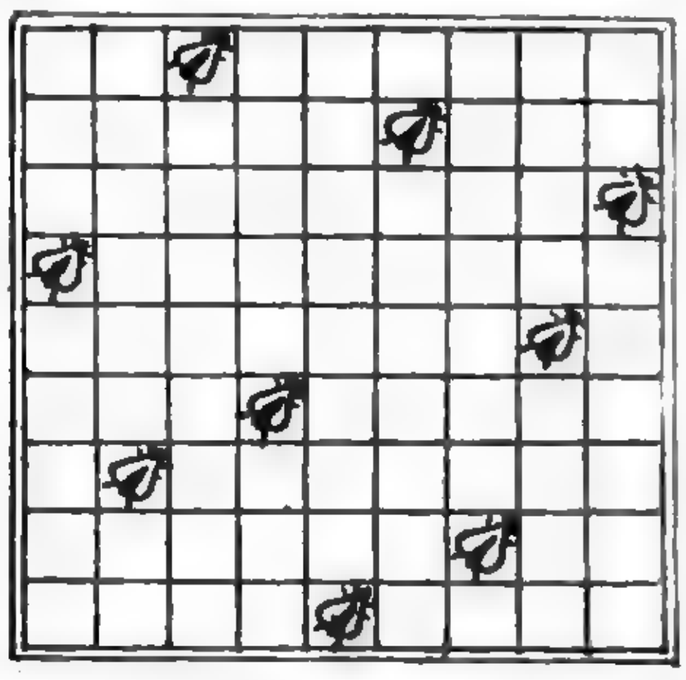
I PASS my life in turning round;
No head nor feet do I demand.
Cut off my head (Hibernian sound!)
I'm clearly made to walk and stand.
Behead, and "sure as eggs is eggs,"
I wriggle, for I have no legs.

126.—A CHARADE.

My *second* suggested that it would be my *whole* to go to my *first*, but I replied that I was not my *third* to do so this *first* and *second*.

127.—FLIES ON WINDOW-PANES.

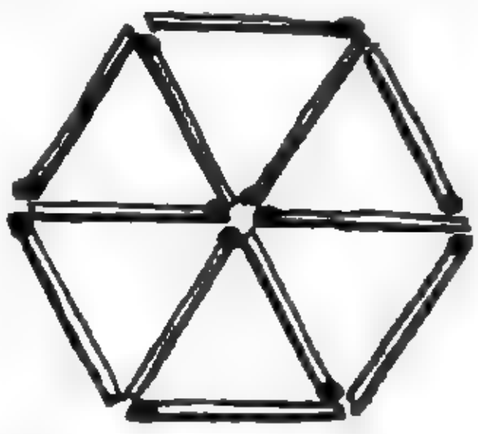
HERE we have a window containing eighty-one panes of glass. There are nine flies on as many panes, and no fly is in line with another one, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Now, six of these flies are very torpid and do not move; but each of the remaining three goes to another pane adjoining that on which it is now shown, and yet after their change of station not one of the flies will be found in line with another. Which are the three lively flies, and which are the three panes (at present unoccupied) to which they pass?



Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

117.—REAPING THE CORN.

THE whole field must have contained 46·626 square rods. The side of the central square, left by the farmer, is 4·8,284 rods, so it contains 23·313 square rods. The area of the field was thus something more than a quarter of an acre and less than one-third; to be more precise, ·2,914 of an acre.



118.—THE SIX SHEEP-PENS.

PLACE the twelve matches in the manner shown in the illustration and you will have six pens of equal size.

119.—THE JUNIOR CLERKS' PUZZLE.

ALTHOUGH Snoggs's *reason* for wishing to take his rise of £2 10s. half-yearly did not concern our puzzle, the *fact* that he was duping his employer into paying him more than was intended did concern it. Many readers will be surprised to find that, although Moggs only received £350 in five years, the artful Snoggs actually obtained £362 10s. in the same time. The rest is simplicity itself. It is evident that if Moggs saved £87 10s. and Snoggs £181 5s., the latter would be saving twice as great a proportion of his salary as the former (namely, one-half as against one-quarter), and the two sums added together make £268 15s.

120.—MATCH-LESS.

121.—IT is true that the mouse brought out of the box three ears each day, but two of these were those on its own head, which accounts for the little mystery.

122.—

P	E	A	R	L
E	L	S	I	E
A	S	I	D	E
R	I	D	E	R
L	E	E	R	S

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MY BILLIARDS.

And the Strokes That Made It.

By JOHN ROBERTS.

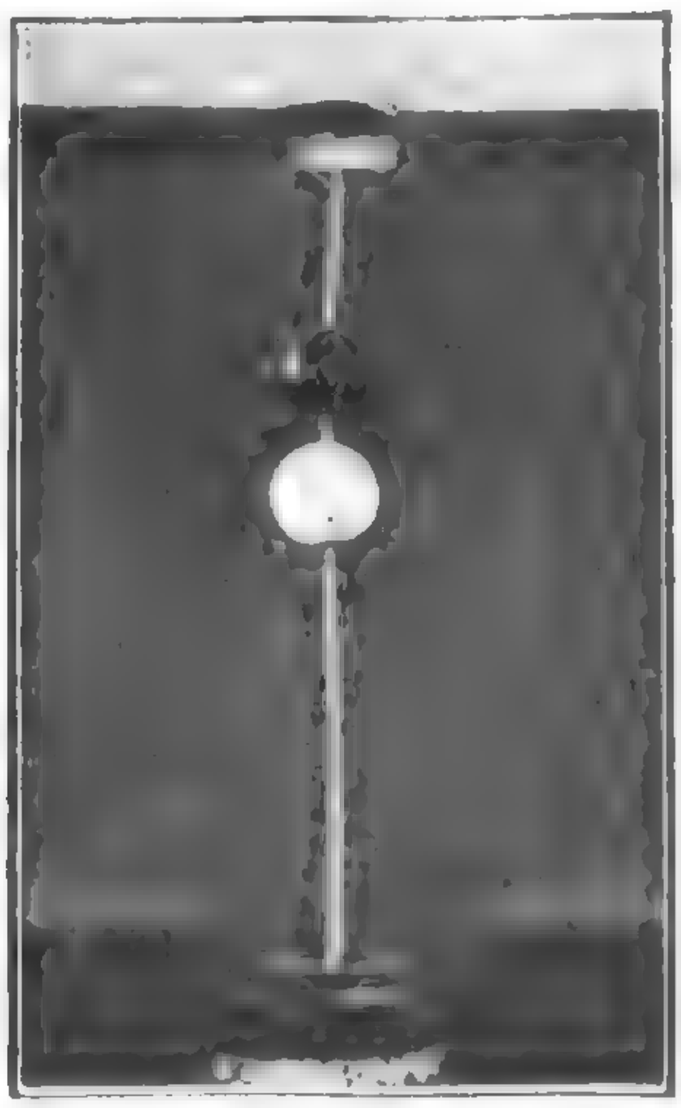
ILLUSTRATED BY AN ENTIRELY NEW METHOD.

[The photographs accompanying the text constitute the unique feature of these articles. Each stroke was set up on his own standard table by Mr. John Roberts personally, and the lines of white worsted illustrating the run of the balls — of ivory, standard size and equal weight — were placed in position by him. The spot on the cue-ball shows the exact place where that ball must be struck to make the stroke depicted, and the line running from the cue-ball to the object-ball shows the line of aim for the stroke.]

Part II.—Some Screw and Side Strokes.

AS a general rule the average tyro at billiards regards screw strokes with a certain amount of nervous awe. There are disagreeable traditions of cutting a cloth associated with these shots, and there is likewise a traditional guinea to pay for the damage. But this is all a billiard myth. It is impossible to cut a billiard cloth by playing any stroke. Even such an exhibition effort as making a ball jump over the rest and score a cannon by returning after the leap does not contain the smallest element of danger to the cloth. But this is always provided the cuemanship is above reproach, that the cue is swung, not pushed or poked along. It is both safe and easy to impart screw to a billiard-ball when once the fact is realized that a good cue delivery is a great deal more than half the battle. Aim should be taken at a point well below the centre of the cue-ball. The cue should be swung and held exactly as usual, but as soon as the tip has fairly got hold of the cue-ball the butt should be grasped firmly, thus stopping the quick forward movement of the cue.

Nothing else is required to impart screw to a billiard-ball, and the distance a ball can be brought back is largely a matter of practice, but its limit doubtless depends on the inherent cue power of individuals. In actual play, however, there is seldom or never any demand for the maximum of screw effect obtainable in billiards. I can make a ball screw back literally for yards, and do so in exhibition billiards. But there is nothing gained by the amateur striving to try to copy something which is probably largely a natural gift. He can train himself to make all the screw strokes he will ever require in the course of a game, so he need not worry because astonishing effects exploited by professors to entertain an audience are beyond him. Our first photograph shows a useful screw stroke for the amateur to practise. The red is on the centre spot of the table, the white about a foot behind it and directly in line with both middle pockets.

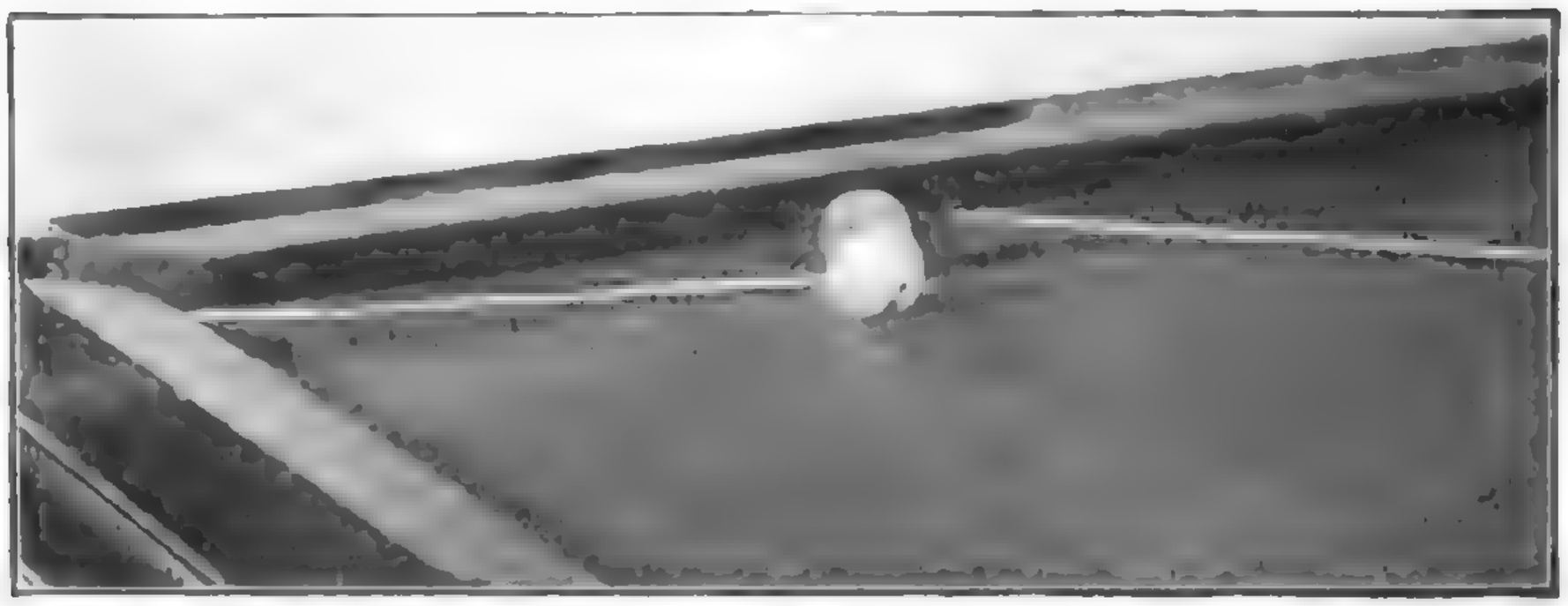


NO. I. A "TEST" SCREW SHOT.

The stroke is a six shot—pot the red in one pocket and screw the cue-ball straight back into the other. There is nothing extraordinary about it. Plenty of amateurs can make the stroke, and others demanding a longer return journey on the part of the cue-ball are frequently made by cuemen whose general billiard prowess does not entitle them to a position far removed from scratch in the club handicap. But the stroke will serve very well indeed as what may be called a "test" screw shot, because the man who can make it practically every time with ease and certainty has quite a useful

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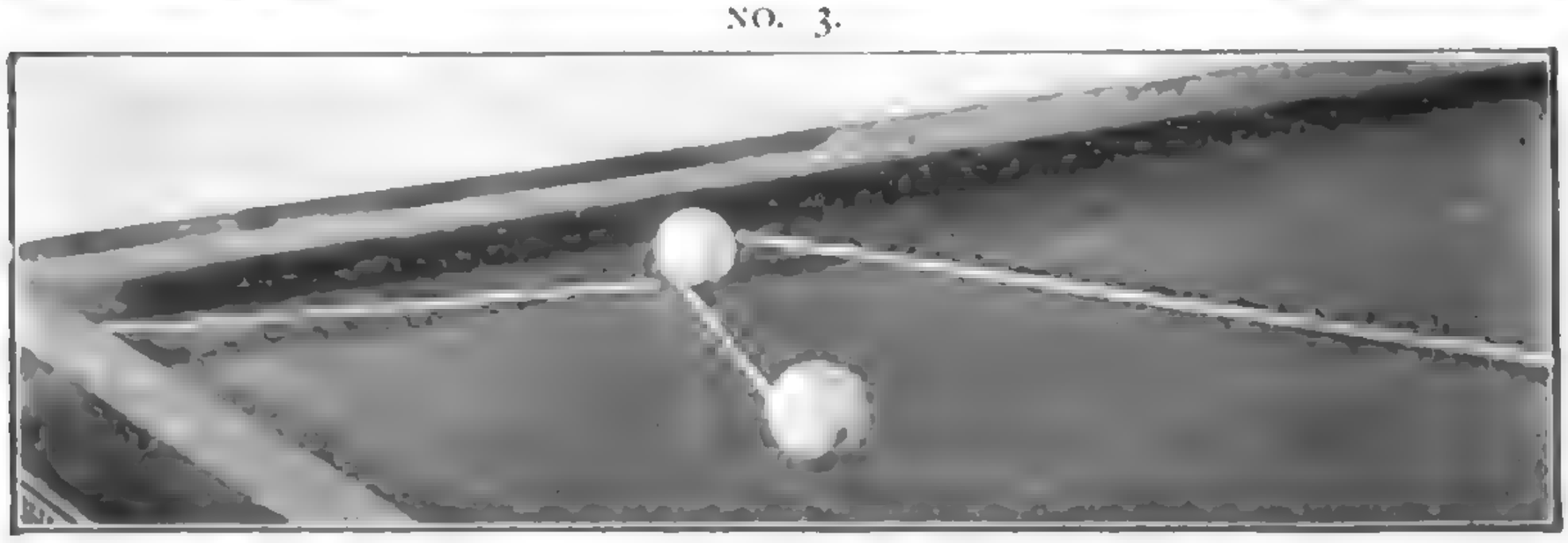
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NO. 2.



NO. 3.



NO. 4.

THREE PHOTOGRAPHS OF "SCREW AND SIDE" STROKES WHICH ARE ALIKE, YET DIFFERENT. IN EACH CASE THE ANGLE IS THE SAME, AND THE CUE-BALL IS STRUCK ON THE SAME SPOT. BUT THE INCREASING DISTANCE BETWEEN THE BALLS NECESSITATES A CHANGE IN THE BALL-TO-BALL CONTACT — A MOST IMPORTANT POINT IN STROKES OF THIS KIND.

command of "twist," as screw used to be termed in my young days. If practice enables him to bring the cue-ball back fairly often with sufficient velocity to enter the pocket with an appreciable amount of pace to spare, he may then rest content with the knowledge that he has acquired mastery enough of screw to take him as far as most men have time and inclination to go in amateur billiards.

It will be noticed that the point of cue contact marked by a dot in all the screw strokes shown in this article is not so low on the sphere as is generally supposed to be necessary to pull a ball back, which brings us to what I term the reliable strikable surface of the cue-ball. I grant that the cue could be directed slightly lower than the spots indicate, and screw strokes accomplished. But what need is there to take this considerable risk of a miss-cue for nothing? And even if the ball is struck below the points indicated by the dots, there is always the chance of the ball jumping more or less and thereby spoiling everything.

Plain screw, useful as it often is, has a much wider range of utility when employed in conjunction with side. The next three photographs show this, and also demonstrate a point in connection with screw which demands careful study.

The photographs referred to are alike, yet different, and this paradox is what I am about to explain. The first picture, No. 2, shows the cue-ball quite close to the object-ball and the losing hazard into the corner baulk pocket is made by striking the cue-ball low and to the right as shown. The cue action must be very good for this to be done, as the balls are quite close enough together for the least bungling to produce anything except the desired result. A neat-handed, crisp cue contact is most essential. The ball-to-ball contact is almost a half-ball, and is made quite clear by the white line on the right showing the angle of departure of the object-ball. Get the body position right for this stroke. Remember that the cue-ball is, so to speak, steered round a corner into the pocket, and unless the cue is aligned perfectly through the spot on the cue-ball to the point of ball contact on the object-ball, the stroke will fail, usually because much too thick a contact is made considering the close proximity of the balls.

Our second photograph, No. 3, in this

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group shows the object-ball in precisely the same position, but the cue-ball has been drawn back a few inches along a line making exactly the same angle with the line to the pocket as in the first stroke. But at this distance a slightly thicker contact between the balls is necessary to make the hazard, and again the contact is proved by the angle of departure of the object-ball shown to the right. These two strokes are most instructive. They show, as nothing else has ever done before pictorially, how the distance between the balls affects contact in screw strokes. The nearer the balls are together, the finer the contact. That is the golden rule, which, if neglected, as it so often is, results in overdoing the stroke.

When the amateur falls into this error he wrongly concludes that he has put on an excess of screw and side, instead of which he has struck the object too full, considering the range of the stroke, and, very possibly, too hard into the bargain. Both the strokes now under discussion can fairly be included in the lengthy catalogue of "slow screws," as they must be handled to bring the object-ball out of baulk, but only far enough across the table to leave an easy losing hazard into the middle pocket.

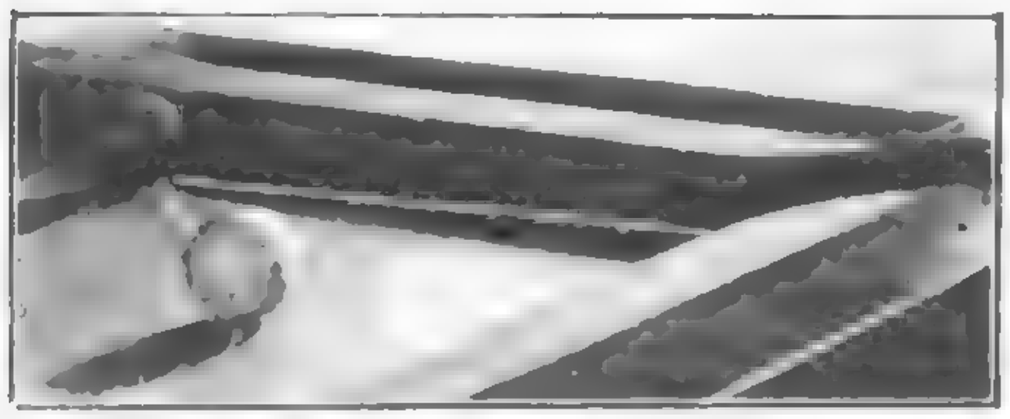
Again we move the cue-ball back along the same line until it is a full two feet from the object, No. 4, and again we strike it in the same place. But this time the ball-to-ball contact is thicker still, on account of the increased distance, and, in addition, an altogether fresh factor enters into the case. We have passed the normal effective range of "slow screw," and this stroke must be played with a fair amount of freedom, hard enough to bring the object-ball into position off the side cushion behind the balls. Note once more the difference in the angle of departure made by the object white. This is now very important, as it is so much more nearly straight across the table that it enables the second cushion to be utilized for position, something out of the game with either of the preceding strokes, which must, as already explained, be played gently enough to attain the desired position off one cushion only.

Why is this increase of force required for the third stroke? Simply because a billiard-ball carrying screw is under the simultaneous influence of two distinct things, and a third is added when side comes in. The momentum of the stroke sends the ball forward, the low contact and characteristic snap in the cue delivery impart a backward rotation, and if side is also used the ball spins laterally. Sundry elaborate attempts have been made to explain the theory of this, but to my mind it appears simple enough. I do not for a moment pose as an authority on the scientific laws expounded by the learned to account for the action of bodies in motion, but my idea is that screw causes a billiard-ball to revolve on its horizontal axis, side sets it spinning on its vertical axis, and the forward movement of a ball laden with screw and side is at first a kind of glide caused by the whole force of the stroke. But the practical point is that these three forces are unequal in duration. Screw is the first to become exhausted, then side, and finally the forward momentum. Screw dies out very fast, so quickly that even capable amateurs should not trust it to last on a slowly-moving cue-ball much beyond the limit of the second of the strokes now before us. Beyond this, increased strength must be employed to impart more backward spin, and also to send the cue-ball as quickly to its destination as the exigencies of positional play permit; thus allowing insufficient time for the essential backward rotation to vanish or diminish to an extent which mars the intended stroke.

All this, when reduced to practice on the billiard-table, simply means that when there is the least doubt as to whether slow screw will effect a score, then it should be left severely alone, and the cue-ball struck hard enough to make sure that enough screw will be available at the point of ball contact to produce the desired result. This resolve to always be on the safe side regarding the effective range of "slow screw" is the more necessary because the amount of nap on a cloth, the quantity of moisture in the atmosphere, variations in density and quality of ivory, and the inherent cue-power of individuals, all exercise an influence on this class of stroke. Obviously, when these constantly changing factors are added to the known truth that screw on a slowly-moving ball is very evanescent, it can never be the game to leave a doubtful "slow one" to chance. Change the nature of the stroke to the extent of making the pace normal whenever a "slow screw" cannot be played with confidence, and a fruitful cause of failure even in good-class amateur billiards will be avoided.

Another trio of screw strokes now demands attention. It is no use trying these slowly, on account of the distance the cue-ball has to travel back to the pocket. On the other hand, there is no need to smash at them; the pace should be regulated to the desired

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NO. 5. A LOSING HAZARD WITH SCREW AND SIDE.



NO. 6 THE BALL-TO-BALL CONTACT FOR THE ABOVE.

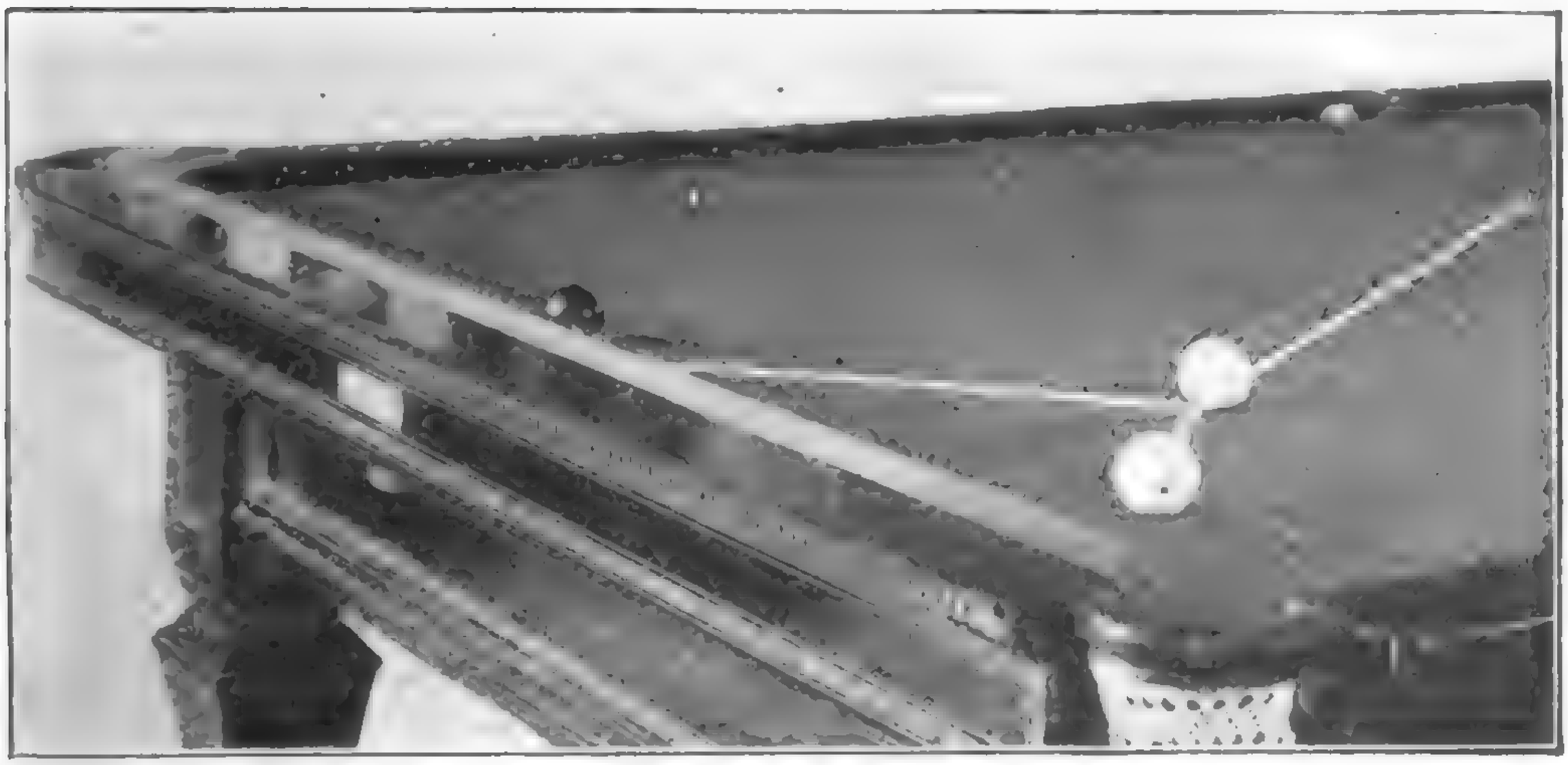
after-position. The first—a losing hazard, with screw and side, into a right-hand corner pocket—comes out so beautifully in the photograph, No. 5, that I need write but little about it after what I have already laid down regarding the theory and application of screw and side. But the second illustration, No. 6, depicting the ball contact, should not be passed over casually, as I think many inexperienced players would have elected to strike the red more fully, which would bring the cue-ball back somewhere between the two lines, unless a different—and wrong—cue contact happened to be made. This brings us to a very interesting problem. By varying the contact with the red ball and the pace of the stroke it would be quite possible to make the hazard from the position shown, either with plain screw or even with screw and left-hand side. But in spite of the score such strokes would be radically bad. The side as shown helps the cue-ball into the pocket; the other side does just the reverse, and, of course, no side means that unless the ball enters the pocket opening to a nicety it will not drop. So why make the stroke more difficult than it really is? Why throw aside every assistance a full knowledge of the game can give?

The next stroke, No. 7, is very similar, but is played on the opposite side of the table, and I have purposely varied the angle a trifle to render a somewhat thicker ball contact essential. I have not had the camera brought to bear on this fresh contact, as it will do my readers good to work it out for themselves. There remains but one other point, which is that in both strokes the cue contact is exactly the same; the difference is confined to ball contact. This rule holds good with all screw strokes from the direct pull-back to the right-angle screw. All these strokes should be made with the same amount of screw on the cue-ball so far as the point of cue contact goes; the various effects are produced by dividing the object-ball to admit of the required variations in ball contact. Again this demonstrates that simplification of essentials which is the art, and so largely the concealed art, of billiards. If I made a dozen or more screw strokes all different from balls in the same position, how many ordinary players would even guess that the cue-ball was struck in the same place for each stroke? Yet such is the fact, and as my cuemanship makes the hitting of the same spot on the cue-ball a mechanical matter, it follows that I can concentrate my observation on the necessary ball contact and after-position. Variations in cue contact come into play when screw assists in the making of strokes beyond the right angle; for anything between the right angle and the player the amount of screw need not be changed to make any angle, but ball contact and force will be constantly varying.



NO. 7. ANOTHER SCREW LOSER PLAYED WITH SIDE.

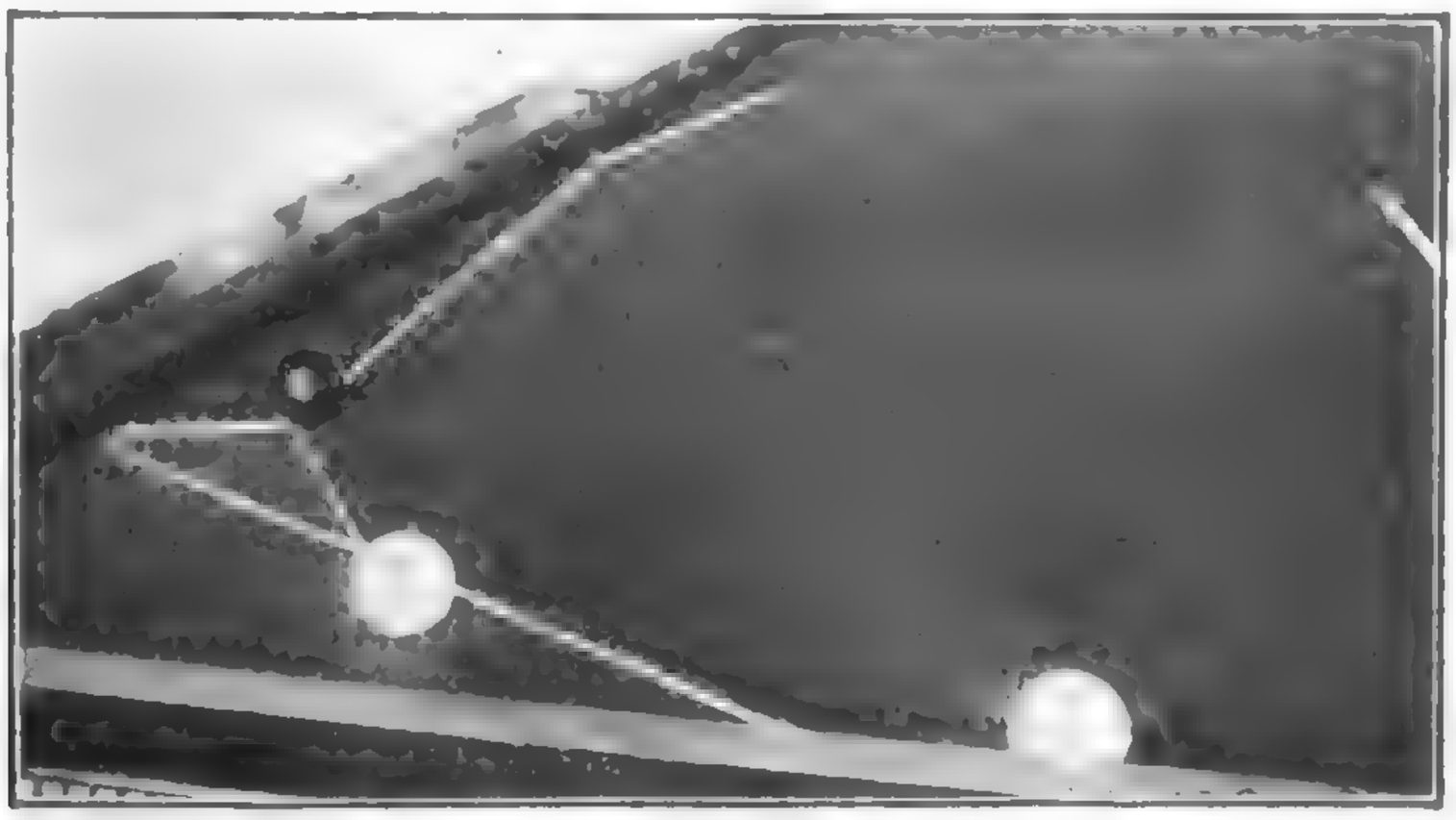
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NO. 8. A GATHERING CANNON.

We now pass to a couple of strokes the first of which, No. 8, illustrates a characteristic of screw which renders that property of peculiar value in positional billiards. The balls are at the spot end, and a screw cannon can and should be played with the proportion of right-hand side indicated by the spot on the cue-ball and enough strength to bring the object white back to the top of the table after impact with three cushions. Yet the pace of the cue-ball will not be more than is necessary to complete the cannon off the top cushion and extricate the red ball from its unfavourable position. This is because the low cue contact has deadened the run of the cue-ball, and thus achieved the positional salvation of the red in spite of strength great enough to send the object-ball best part of thirty feet before that is also brought round into favourable position.

Our next photograph, No. 9, shows the balls still at the top end of the table, but so awkwardly placed that a really good stroke must be played to make the cannon and at the same time "gather" the balls when the stroke is completed. A cannon off the red *viâ* the side and top cushions is the shot, and the camera has made it so very clear that I need not dilate on playing details. But the white line beyond the red demands more than a passing thought, as it shows the path that ball must take if the correct contact is made. There is another matter connected with both the strokes now under review, which is that in each case the cannon is completed by the cue-ball striking the cushion a little in front of the second object-ball, and each time with what amounts to a mere shade of running side the instant the cue-ball touches the last cushion.



NO. 9. A GOOD POSITIONAL CANNON.

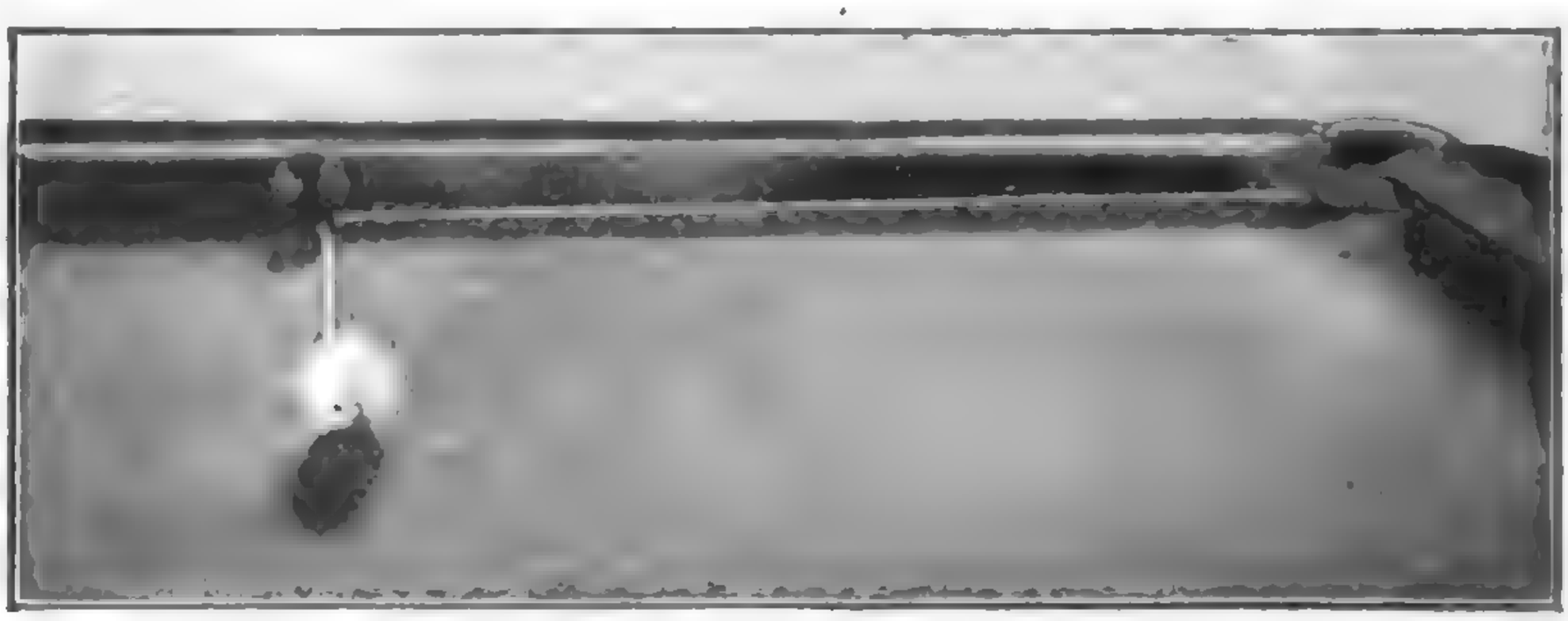
This enlarges the target presented by the second object-ball to a tremendous extent,

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and should never be neglected when the second object-ball lies near a cushion, and the niceties of positional play do not demand a direct contact on that ball.

Mention of positional play reminds me that the two cannons we have just been discussing are typical specimens of the "gathering" strokes I have exploited so much during my playing career. The central idea is always the same—namely, to bring the first object-ball round after a journey into baulk, and to cannon slowly enough on to the second object to keep both that and the cue-ball at the spot end. More than this cannot be done. It is sheer nonsense to write about controlling these "gathering" strokes to an inch, or even six. When I play such strokes I know that if the fates are kind, even to me, I shall have an ideal top of the table position left, but I also know that the chance of a feasible score off either ball will be much greater—so much greater that it will be distinctly bad luck if the balls run virtually safe. But I may have a losing hazard presented, or a red winner which cannot be made without losing command of the balls at "the top." The whole point is that when playing these "gatherers" I have a rough but eminently reliable notion of the approximate position of the three balls when the score is completed, and it satisfies me if anything reasonably easy is left. I have emphasized this point because, to my mind, it is very wrong to allow amateurs to think that a professor can control such strokes "to an inch," and to set them the heart-breaking task of striving after such unattainable perfection.

Our final stroke, No. 10, is by way of being a favourite trial horse with amateurs who have made considerable progress beyond the rudiments of the game. It is a losing hazard into a baulk pocket played with strong screw and side. The object-ball is just out of baulk and a little away from the cushion, and the cue-ball is placed on the corner spot of the "D" nearest the object. The contact must not be too thick, or a kiss will result, and it must not be too thin, or the awkward angle necessary after ball contact in this stroke is not to be made.



NO. 10. A FAVOURITE "TRIAL HORSE."

Altogether, the amateur who can make this stroke with reasonable certainty on a standard table is entitled to credit himself with cue power of no mean order. But those who find the stroke altogether beyond them need not worry unduly. If their percentage of failures in plain-ball strokes is less than another man's they are sure to beat him, no matter if every now and again he brings off something impressive in the way of a "big" stroke which is outside the game of the steady but sure plain-ball hazard striker. Mastering hard strokes does not make a billiard-player. The man who succeeds never misses the easy ones.

Mr. John Roberts has written two further articles to complete the series, and these will be published at the commencement of the next billiard season.

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WET MAGIC

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

By E. NESBIT.

Illustrated by H. R. Millar.

CHAPTER VI.

THE parents of Mavis, Francis, Kathleen, and Bernard were extremely sensible people. If they had not been this story could never have happened. They were as jolly as any father and mother you ever met, but they were not always fussing and worrying about their children, and they understood perfectly well that children do not care to be absolutely always under the parental eye. So that, while there were always plenty of good times in which the whole family took part, there were also times when father and mother went off together and enjoyed themselves in their own grown-up way, while the children enjoyed themselves in theirs. It happened that on this particular afternoon there was to be a concert at Lymington. Father and mother were going. The children were asked whether they would like to go, and refused with equal courtesy and firmness.

"Very well, then," said mother, "you do whatever you like best. I should play on the shore, I think, if I were you. Only don't go round the corner of the cliff, because that's dangerous at high tide. It's safe along where you're within sight of the coastguards."

"Mother," said Kathleen, suddenly, "may we take some pie and things to a little boy who said he hadn't had anything to eat since yesterday?"

"Very well," said mother; "you might ask Mrs. Pearce to give you some bread and cheese as well. Now I must simply fly."

Reuben did not eat with such pretty manners as yours, perhaps, but there was no doubt about his enjoyment of the food they had brought, though he only stopped eating for half a second to answer, "Prime, thank you," to Kathleen's earnest inquiries.

"Now," said Francis, when the last crumb of cheese had disappeared and the last trace of plum juice had been licked from the spoon —"now, look here. We're going straight down to the shore to try and see the mermaid. And if you come with us we can disguise you."

"What in?" Reuben asked.

"We thought," said Mavis, gently, "that perhaps the most suitable disguise for you would be girl's clothes."

"Go along on," said the spangled child.

"And I've brought you some of my things and some sand-shoes of France's, because, of course, mine are just kiddy shoes."

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At that Reuben burst out laughing, and then hummed, "Go, flatterer, go; I'll not list to thy vow," quite musically.

"Oh, do you know 'The Gipsy Countess'? How jolly!" said Kathleen.

"Old Mother Romaine knew a power of songs," he said, suddenly grave. "Come on, chuck us in the togs."

"You just take off your coat and come out. I'll help you dress up," was Francis's offer.

"Best get a skirt over my kicksies first," said Reuben, "case anyone comes by and recognizes the gipsy cheild. Hand us in the silk attire and jewels you have to spare."

They pushed the blue serge skirt and jersey through the branches, which he held apart.

"Now the 'at," he said, reaching a hand for it. But the hat was too large for the opening in the bush, and he had to come out of it. The moment he was out the girls crowned him with the big rush hat, round whose crown a blue scarf was twisted, and Francis and Bernard, each seizing a leg, adorned those legs with brown stockings and white sand-shoes.



"REUBEN STOOD UP AMONG HIS NEW FRIENDS, A RATHER AWKWARD AND QUITE PRESENTABLE LITTLE GIRL."

Reuben, the spangled runaway from the gipsy camp, stood up among his new friends, a rather awkward and quite presentable little girl.

"Now," he said, looking down at his serge skirt with a queer smile. "Now we sha'n't be long."

Nor were they. Thrusting the discarded boots of Reuben into the kind shelter of the bush, they made straight for the sea.

When they got to that pleasant part of the shore which is smooth sand and piled shingle, lying between low rocks and high cliffs, Bernard stopped short.

"Now, look here," he said; "if Sabrina fair turns up trumps I don't mind going on with the adventure. But I won't do it if Kathleen's to be in it."

"It's not fair," said Kathleen. "You said I might."

"Did I?" Bernard most handsomely referred the matter to the others.

"Yes, you did," said Francis, shortly.

Mavis said "Yes," and Reuben clinched the matter by saying, "Why, you up and asked her yourself if she'd go along of you."

"All right," said Bernard, calmly. "Then I sha'n't go myself, that's all."

"Oh, bother!" said at least three of the five, and Kathleen said:—

"I don't see why I should always be out of everything."

"Well," said Mavis, impatiently, "after all, there's no danger in just trying to *see* her. You promise you won't do anything if Bernard says not. That'll do, I suppose, though why you should be a slave to him just because he chooses to say you're his particular sister I don't see. Will *that* do, Bernard?"

"I'll promise *anything*," said Kathleen, almost in tears, "if you'll only let me come with you all and see the mermaid if she turns out to be seeable."

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So that was settled.

Now came the question of where the magic words should be said.

Mavis and Francis voted for the edge of the rocks, where the words had once already been so successfully spoken. Bernard said, "Why not here, where we are?" Kathleen said, rather sadly, that any place would do as long as the mermaid came when she was called. But Reuben, standing sturdily in his girl's clothes, said:—

"Look 'ere. When you've run away like what I have, least said soonest mended, and out of sight's out of mind. What about caves?"

"Caves are too dry, except at high tide," said Francis, "and then they're too wet—much."

"Not all caves," Reuben reminded him. "If we was to turn and go up by the cliff path, there's a cave up there. I hid in it t'other day. Quite dry except in one corner, and there it's as wet as you want—a sort of drinking trough in the rocks it looks like, only deep."

"Is it sea water?" Mavis asked, anxiously. And Reuben said, "Bound to be—so near the sea and all."

But it wasn't, for when they had climbed the cliff path, and Reuben had shown them where to turn aside for it, and had put aside the brambles and gorse that quite hid the cave's mouth, Francis saw at once that the water here could not be sea water. It was too far above the line which the waves reached, even in the stormiest weather.

"So it's no use," he explained.

But the others said, "Oh, do let's try, now we *are* here."

And they went on into the dusky twilight of the cave.

It was a very pretty cave, not chalk like the cliffs, but roofed and walled with grey flints such as the houses and churches are built of that you see on the downs near Brighton and Eastbourne.

"This isn't an accidental cave, you know," said Bernard, importantly. "It's built by the hand of man in distant ages, like Stonehenge and the Kit's Coty House."

The cave was lighted from the entrance, where the sunshine crept faintly through the brambles. Their eyes soon grew used to the gloom, and then they could see that the floor of the cave was of dry white sand, and that along one end was a narrow dark pool of water. Ferns fringed its edge and dropped their fronds to its smooth surface—a surface which caught a gleam of light, and shone whitely. But the pool was very still, and, they felt somehow, without knowing why, very deep.

"It's no good—no earthly," said Francis.

"But it's an awfully pretty cave," said Mavis, consolingly. "Thank you for showing it to us, Reuben. And it's jolly cool. Do let's rest a minute or two. I'm simply boiling, climbing that cliff path. We'll go down to the sea in a minute. Reuben could wait here if he felt safer."

"All right; squattey-vous," said Bernard, and the children sat down in a row on the soft sand at the water's edge, Reuben still very awkward in his girl's clothes.

It was very, very quiet. Only now and then one fat drop of water would fall from the cave's roof into that quiet pool and just move its surface in a spreading circle.

"It's a ripping place for a hiding hole," said Bernard. "Better than that old bush of yours, anyhow. I don't believe anybody knows of the way in."

"*I* don't think anyone does, either," said Reuben, "because there wasn't any way in till it fell in two days ago, when I was trying to dig up a furze root."

"I should hide here if you want to hide," said Bernard.

"I mean to," said Reuben.

"Well, if you've rested, let's get on," Francis said.

But Kathleen urged, "Do let's say 'Sabrina fair,' just—just to try!"

So they said it, all but the spangled child, who did not know it.

> Sabrina fair,
> Listen where thou art sitting
> Under the glassy cool——

There was a splash and a swirl in the pool, and there was the mermaid herself, sure enough. Their eyes had grown used to the dusk, and they could see her quite plainly—could see, too, that she was holding out her arms to them and smiling so sweetly that it almost took their breath away.

"My cherished preservers!" she cried. "My dear, darling, kind, brave, noble, unselfish dears!"

"You're talking to Reuben in the plural by mistake, I suppose?" said Francis, a little bitterly.

"To him, too, of course, but you two most of all," she said, swishing her tail round and leaning her hands on the edge of the pool. "I *am* so sorry I was so ungrateful the other night. I'll tell you how it was. It's in your air. You see, coming out of the water, we're very susceptible to aerial influences; and

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that sort of ungratefulness and—what's the word?"

"Snobbishness," said Francis, firmly.

"Is that what you call it? ——is most frightfully infectious. And your air's absolutely crammed with the germs of it. That's why I was so horrid. You do forgive me, don't you, dears? And I was so selfish, too—oh, horrid! But it's all washed off now in the nice clean sea, and I'm as sorry as if it had been my fault—which it really and truly wasn't."

The children said "All right," and she wasn't to mind, and it didn't matter, and all the things you say when people say they are sorry and you cannot kiss them and say "Right-o," which is the natural answer to such confessions.

"It was very curious," she said, thoughtfully—"a most odd experience. That little boy, his having been born of people who had always been rich, really seemed to me to be important. I assure you it did. Funny, wasn't it? And now I want you all to come home with me and see where I live." She smiled radiantly at them, and they all said "Thank you," and looked at each other rather blankly. "All our people will be unspeakably pleased to see you. We mer-people are not really ungrateful; you mustn't think that," she said, pleadingly.

She looked very kind, very friendly. But Francis thought of the Lorelei. Just so kind and friendly must the Lady of the Rhine have looked to the "sailor in a little skiff" whom he had disentangled from Heine's poem last term, with the aid of the German dicker. By a curious coincidence, and the same hard means, Mavis had, only last term, read of Undine, and she tried not to think that there was any lack of soul in the mermaid's kind eyes. Kathleen, who, by another coincidence, had fed her fancy, in English literature, on the Forsaken Merman, was more at ease.

"Do you mean down with you under the sea?" she asked--

"Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine,
Where great whales go sailing by,
Sail and sail with unshut eye
Round the world for ever and aye?"

"Well, it's not exactly like that, really," said the mermaid; "but you'll see soon enough."

This had, in Bernard's ears, a sinister ring.

"Why," he asked, suddenly, "did you say you wanted to see us at dead of night?"

"It's the usual time, isn't it?" she asked, looking at him with innocent surprise. "It is in all the stories. You know we have air stories, just as you have fairy stories and water stories; and the rescuer almost always comes to the castle gate at dead of night, on a coal-black steed or a dapple grey, you know; but as there were four of you besides me and my tail, I thought it more considerate to suggest a chariot. Now, we really ought to be going."

"Which way?" asked Bernard, and everyone held their breath to hear the answer.

"The way I came, of course," she answered —"down here." And she pointed to the water that rippled round her."

"Thank you so very, *very* much," said Mavis, in a voice that trembled a little; "but I don't know whether you've heard that people who go down into the water like that—people like us, without tails, you know—they get drowned."

"Not if they're personally conducted," said the mermaid. "Of course, one can't be responsible for trespassers, though even out there I don't think anything very dreadful has ever happened. Someone once told me a story about water-babies. Did you never hear of that?"

"Yes; but that was a made-up story," said Bernard, stolidly.

"Yes, of course," she agreed; "but a great deal of it's quite true, all the same. You won't grow fins or gills or anything like that. You needn't be afraid."

The children looked at each other, and then all looked at Francis. He spoke.

"Thank you," he said. "Thank you very much, but we would rather not."

"Oh, nonsense," said the lady, kindly. "Look here, it's as easy as easy. I give you each a lock of my hair." She cut off the locks with her shell knife as she spoke; long locks they were and soft. "Look here. Tie these round your necks—if I'd had a lock of human hair round my neck I should never have suffered from the dryness as I did—and then just jump in. Keep your eyes shut. It's rather confusing if you don't. But there's no danger."

The children took the locks of hair, but no one had any confidence in them regarded as life-saving apparatus. They still hung back.

"You really are silly," said the sea lady, indulgently. "Why did you meddle with magic at all if you weren't prepared to go through with it? Why, this is one of the simplest forms of magic and the safest. Whatever would you have done if you had happened to call up a fire spirit and had had to go down Vesuvius with a salamander round your little necks?"

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She laughed merrily at the thought. But her laugh sounded a little angry, too.

"Come, don't be foolish," she said. "You'll never have such a chance again. And I feel that this air is full of your horrid human microbes—distrust, suspicion, fear, anger, resentment—horrid little germs. I don't want to risk catching them. Come."

"No," said Francis, and held out to her the lock of hair. So did Mavis and Bernard and Kathleen, only Kathleen said, "I *should* have liked to, but I promised Bernard I would not do anything unless he said I might."

It was towards Kathleen that the mermaid turned, holding out a white hand for the lock.

Kathleen bent over the water to give it, and in one awful instant the mermaid had reared herself up in the water, caught Kathleen in her long white arms, pulled her over the edge of the pool, and with a bubbling splash disappeared with her beneath the dark water.



"THE MERMAID REARED HERSELF UP IN THE WATER AND CAUGHT KATHLEEN IN HER LONG WHITE ARMS."

Mavis screamed and knew it. Francis and Bernard thought they did not scream. It was the spangled child alone who said nothing. He alone had not offered to give back the lock of soft hair. He had instead knotted it round his neck. He now tied a further knot and stepped forward and spoke in tones which the other three thought the most noble they had ever heard.

"She give me the pie," he said, and leapt into the water.

He sank at once. And this, curiously enough, gave the others confidence. If he had struggled—but no, he sank like a stone, or like a diver who means diving and diving to the very bottom.

"She's my sister," said Bernard, and leapt.

"If it's magic it's all right, and if it isn't, we couldn't go back without her," said Mavis, hoarsely.

And she and Francis took hands and jumped together.

It was not so difficult as it sounds. From the moment of Kathleen's disappearance the sense of magic—which is rather like very sleepy comfort and sweet scent and sweet music that you just can't hear the tune of—had been growing stronger and stronger. And there are some things so horrible that if you can bring yourself to face them you simply *can't* believe that they're true. It did

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not seem possible, when they came quite close to the idea, that a mermaid could really come and talk so kindly and then drown the five children who had rescued her.

"It's all right," Francis cried, as they jumped. "I——".

He shut his mouth just in time, and down they went.

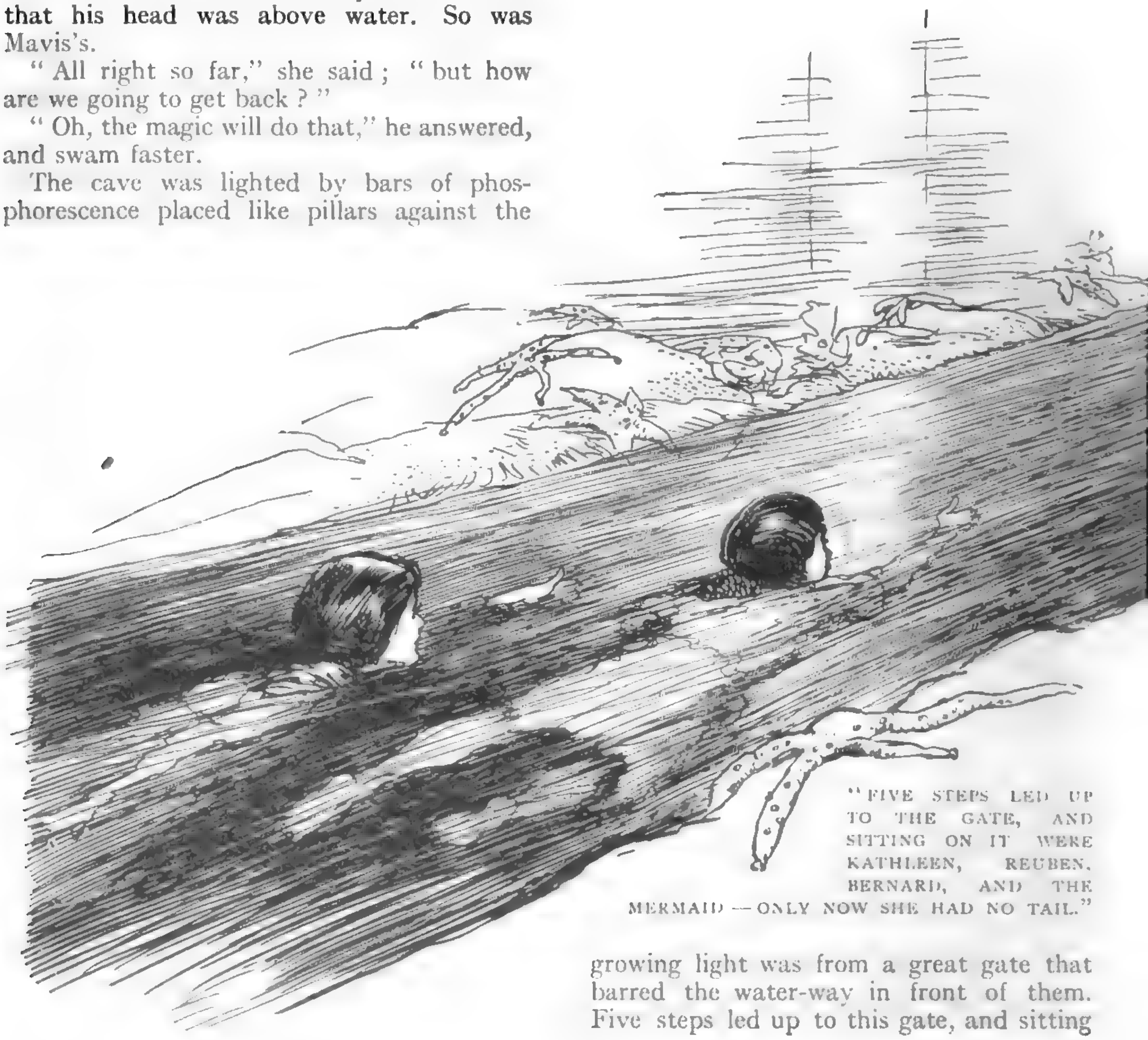
You have probably dreamed that you were a perfect swimmer. You know the delight of that dream-swimming, which is no effort at all, and yet carries you as far and as fast as you choose. It was like that with the children. The moment they touched the water they felt that they belonged in it—that they were as much at home in water as in air. As they sank beneath the water their feet went up and their heads went down, and there they were swimming downwards with long, steady, easy strokes. It was like swimming down a well that presently widened to a cavern. Suddenly Francis found that his head was above water. So was Mavis's.

"All right so far," she said; "but how are we going to get back?"

"Oh, the magic will do that," he answered, and swam faster.

The cave was lighted by bars of phosphorescence placed like pillars against the walls. The water was clear and deeply green, and along the sides of the stream were sea-anemones and starfish of the most beautiful shapes and the most dazzling colours. The walls and roof were of mother-of-pearl, which gleamed and glistened in the pale, golden radiance of the phosphorescent pillars. It was very beautiful, and the mere pleasure of swimming so finely and easily swept away almost their last fear. This, too, went when a voice far ahead called, "Hurry up, France! Come on, Mavis!" And the voice was the voice of Kathleen.

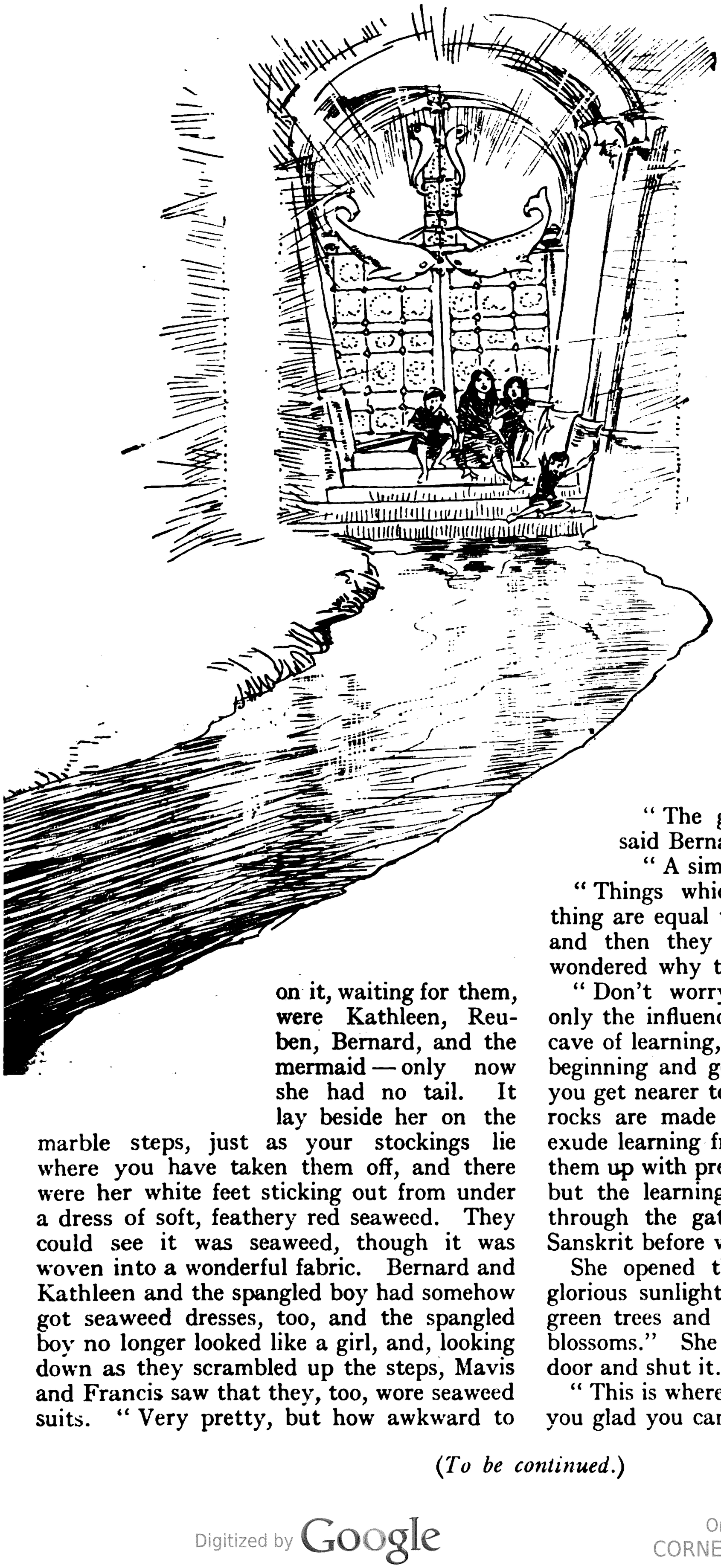
They hurried up and they came on, and the gleaming, soft light grew brighter and brighter. It shone all along the way they had to go, making a path of glory such as the moon makes across the sea on a summer night. And presently they saw that this



"FIVE STEPS LED UP TO THE GATE, AND SITTING ON IT WERE KATHLEEN, REUBEN, BERNARD, AND THE MERMAID—ONLY NOW SHE HAD NO TAIL."

growing light was from a great gate that barred the water-way in front of them. Five steps led up to this gate, and sitting

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on it, waiting for them, were Kathleen, Reuben, Bernard, and the mermaid — only now she had no tail. It lay beside her on the marble steps, just as your stockings lie where you have taken them off, and there were her white feet sticking out from under a dress of soft, feathery red seaweed. They could see it was seaweed, though it was woven into a wonderful fabric. Bernard and Kathleen and the spangled boy had somehow got seaweed dresses, too, and the spangled boy no longer looked like a girl, and, looking down as they scrambled up the steps, Mavis and Francis saw that they, too, wore seaweed suits. "Very pretty, but how awkward to go home in!" Mavis thought.

"Now," said the mer-lady, "forgive me for taking the plunge. I knew you'd hesitate for ever, and I was beginning to feel so cross! Now, here we are at the door of our kingdom. You do want to come in, don't you? I can bring you as far as this against your will, but not any farther. And you can't come any farther unless you trust me absolutely. Do you? Will you? Try!"

"Yes," said the children, all but Bernard, who said, stoutly: "I don't; but I'll try to—I want to."

"If you want to, I think you *do*," said she, very kindly. "And now I will tell you one thing. What you're breathing isn't air, and it isn't water. It's something that both water people and air people can breathe."

"The greatest common measure," said Bernard.

"A simple equation," said Mavis.

"Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other," said Francis, and then they looked at each other and wondered why they had said such things.

"Don't worry," said the lady; "it's only the influence of the place. This is the cave of learning, you know, very dark at the beginning and getting lighter and lighter as you get nearer to the golden door. All these rocks are made of books, really, and they exude learning from every crack. We cover them up with pretty things as well as we can, but the learning will leak out. Let us go through the gate, or you'll all be talking Sanskrit before we know where we are."

She opened the gate. A great flood of glorious sunlight met them—the "solace of green trees and the jewelled grace of bright blossoms." She pulled them through the door and shut it.

"This is where we live," she said. "Aren't you glad you came?"

(*To be continued.*)

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A Page of Tongue-Twisters.

Bill had a bill board. Bill also had a board bill. The board bill bored Bill, so Bill sold the bill board to pay his board bill. So after Bill sold his bill board to pay his board bill, the board bill no longer bored Bill.

Our readers will remember that in a recent issue we published the above story of Bill and his Board, and at the same time offered to print and pay for any sentences of the same kind which were sufficiently amusing to be used. This invitation has met with such a liberal response that we have experienced some difficulty in limiting our selection to those given below. It should, perhaps, be added that most of the best examples were sent in by different readers.

HERE is a description of a duel between two men, whose names are Shot and Not: Shot shot the first shot, and the shot Shot shot shot not Not, and the shot Not shot shot not Shot, so Shot shot again, and again the shot Shot shot shot not Not, but the shot Not shot shot Shot, so Not won notwithstanding.—Mr. P. Casterton, London House, Wisbech, Cambs.

BETTY BOTTER bought some butter,
But she said, "This butter's bitter;
If I put it in my batter,
It will make my batter bitter.
But a bit o' better butter
Would but make my batter better."
So she bought a bit of butter,
Better than the bitter butter;
So 'twas better Betty Botter
Bought a bit o' better butter.

—Miss Stella Brown, 84, Sistova Road, Balham, S.W.

ESAU sawed wood. Esau Wood would saw wood. All the wood Esau Wood saw, Esau Wood would saw. In other words, all the wood Esau saw to saw Esau sought to saw. All the wood Wood would saw! And, oh, the wood-saw with which Wood would saw wood. But one day Wood's wood-saw would saw no wood, and thus the wood Wood sawed was not the wood Wood would saw if Wood's wood-saw would saw wood. Now, Wood would saw wood with a wood-saw that would saw wood. So Esau sought a saw that would saw wood; and one day Esau saw a saw saw wood as no other saw would saw wood. In fact, of all the wood-saws Wood ever saw saw wood, Wood never saw a wood-saw that would saw wood as that wood-saw Wood saw saw wood; and so I saw Esau Wood saw wood with the wood-saw Wood saw saw wood.—Mr. Joseph J. Johnson, American House, Clara, King's County, Ireland.

THE editor of a farmers' paper who had been keeping a record of big beets announces at last that: The beet that beat the beet that beat the other beet is now beaten by a beet that beats all the beets, whether the original beet, the beet that beat the beet, or the beet that beat the beet that beat the beet.—Mr. Arthur Frost, 62, Mercer Street, Newton-le-Willows.

THE following should be read slowly, remembering that a railway sleeping-car is often called a "sleeper": A sleeper is one who sleeps. A sleeper is that in which a sleeper sleeps. A sleeper is that on which the sleeper runs while the sleeper sleeps. Therefore, while the sleeper sleeps in the sleeper, the sleeper carries the sleeper over the sleeper under the sleeper until the sleeper which carries the sleeper jumps the sleeper and wakes the sleeper in the sleeper by striking the sleeper under the sleeper on the sleeper, and there is no longer any sleeper sleeping in the sleeper on the sleeper.—Mr. A. G. Goldspink, Crabbs Cross, near Redditch, Worcestershire.

AT a mock Parliament held in Bristol, the "Hon. Member for Stranraer" asked the "Right Hon. the President of the Board of Trade" (referring to the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, Prevention of Collisions) "Whether a lighterman, having two light lighters in tow, would be required to light a lighter light on the lighter lighter, so that the lighter the lighter the lighter the light?"

The President replied: "Obviously the answer is in the negative, since the lighter lighter being the lighter, and the use of the comparative 'lighter' denoting that the lighter is already 'light,' the lighter of the lights would not be required to light a lighter light on the lighter lighter, since the lighter lighter is lighter than the light lighter."—Mrs. Thos. C. Pearse, 38, Queen Square, Bristol.

I SAY, John, people say you say I say "I say" to everything I do say, I say, John; but even if I do say "I say" to everything I do say, I say, John, it's no reason for you to say I say "I say" to everything I do say, I say, John.—Mr. C. F. West, 11, Pembridge Crescent, W.

How much wood would a wood-chuck chuck, if a wood-chuck would chuck wood? A wood-chuck would chuck all the wood he would chuck if a wood-chuck would chuck wood.—Mr. R. A. Jonscher, 216, Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Finally, here are two examples which we will leave readers to puzzle out and punctuate for themselves:—

That that is is that that is not is not that that is is not that that is not that that is not is not that that is is that it it is.—Mr. George Barton, 222, High Road, Leyton, N.E.

Were but but and and and but but but and and would be and and but and and and but but but and and and and and and but but and but and but and but but and and and.—Mr. John M. Granger, 53, Granville Avenue, West Hartlepool.

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CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]



A MUNICIPAL "AU REVOIR."

SAN BERNARDINO, California, being located in the extreme western portion of the United States, one might expect a certain amount of breeziness on the part of the inhabitants. The accompanying photograph shows the unconventional greeting conveyed by a signboard, which the municipality has placed at a conspicuous point of the principal automobile road leading from the city.—Mr. James C. Threlfall, Box 555, San Bernardino, California, U.S.A.

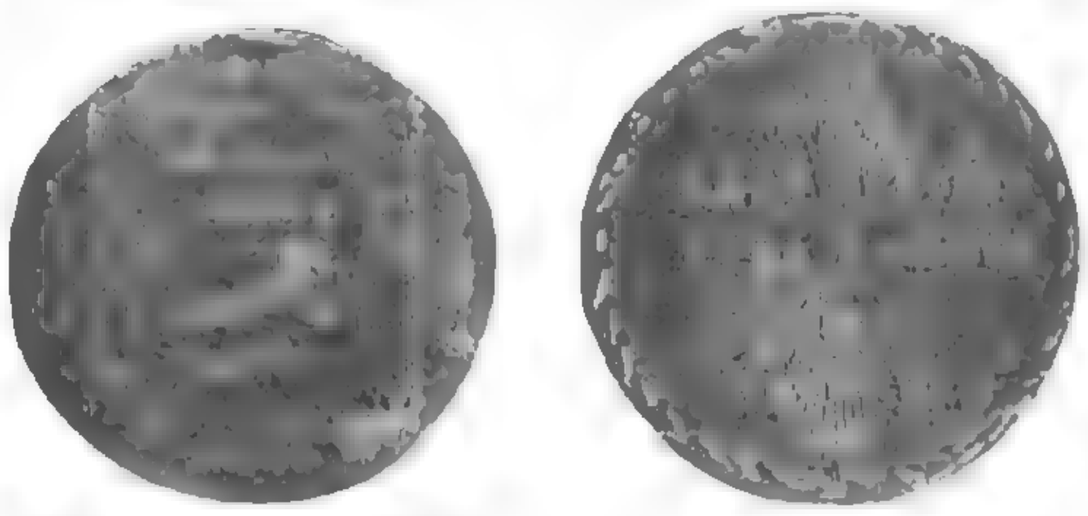
TWO HEADS OR TWO TAILS?

I SEND you a photograph of a malformed earthworm, which I found at Henley-on-Thames. Although I have been a fisherman for the last thirty years, and have seen many thousands of worms, I have never before seen a deformed one, nor have any of my fishing friends. It is a mystery to us how it managed to make its way through the earth.—Mr. Sydney Morgan, 65, Montholme Road, New Wandsworth, S.W.



BY WHOM WAS IT COINED?

I HAVE in my possession a curious brass coin, and should very much like to know why it was coined,



and by whom. It will be seen that one side represents the disturbed state of France in 1794, with fire in all corners, the throne upside down, honour underfoot, glory set on one side, and religion overthrown. As the other side reads, "May Great Britain ever remain the reverse," the meaning is, of course, obvious. —Lara Pacho Va. Luigi, Lari, Pisa, Italy.

AN OWL IN A COWL.

THIS owl — a brown one— made its home in the above cowl for ten days recently. It flew away in the evenings, but was back in its strange home early next morning. The cowl is on the chimney of a house only a few yards from a busy thoroughfare in Kew; it revolves very freely, and the owl was always sheltered from the wind. — Miss H. Hope, 16, West Park Gardens, Kew.



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TO NIGHT NOWSHERA.

At 9½ p.m. THE NEW ALFASTONE THEATRICAL At 9½ p.m.

COMPANY OF INDIA.

CHANDRAWLI. (an Empress.)

1ST DROP.

1st SCENE—Raja Ramas Darbar and to discus about moonface (Chandrawali)

2nd SCENE—Discus between Gangi and Mehtab Khan for bringing Chandrawli in the Darbar

3rd SCENE—Chandrawli deceived by Bagchela and taken away with him

4th SCENE—Mourning of Rangeet Singh on his house.

5th SCENE—In the way Chandrawli saw Mahatma preying God and came to him as a Lurd seller Mahatma was beloved to her and Mahatma requested her to fulfill his wishes

6th SCENE—Palace of Chandrawli to be angry of Chandrawli's mother and to sent her to under house

7th SCENE—To be stolen of their hen and sold to Morn Khan etc

8th SCENE—Bag of Gulnar To enter of Ranjit Singh in the garden and Gulnar was beloved to him

2ND DROP SCENE

1st SCENE.—Gulnar to be looked anxions in the love of Ranjit Singh and etc.

2nd SCENE—To come of Nehal Singh the Chndra wali's uncle house and to request to Chandrawl to fulfil ois wishes.

3rd SCENE—To be looked of Chandrawli bathing on the bridge of the river to Mahatma and etc

4th SCENE—Mourming of Chandrawli's the Forest (Jangal) and to be loved with a Ghasiara, to come there a robber etc.

5th SCENE.—To pray to go of Robber and Chandrawali and etc

Note-Smoking is strictly prohibited.

Rates:—

Special Class	1st Class	2nd Class	3rd Class
Rs. 3/-	Rs. 2/-	Re 1/-	As -/8/-

Empire Press, Nowshera.

AN INDIAN THEATRE.

I THINK you will agree that this snapshot of an Indian theatre, together with its playbill, really deserves a place in your "Curiosity" columns. The theatre was recently put up in the very centre of cantonments, quite close to the bazaar, and is the pride of its owner's heart. The booking-office, made of grass mats, can be seen just on the right of the gate, while the main entrance to the theatre can be seen well to the left.—Mr. D. Hannan, care of Sanitary Inspector, Nowshera, India

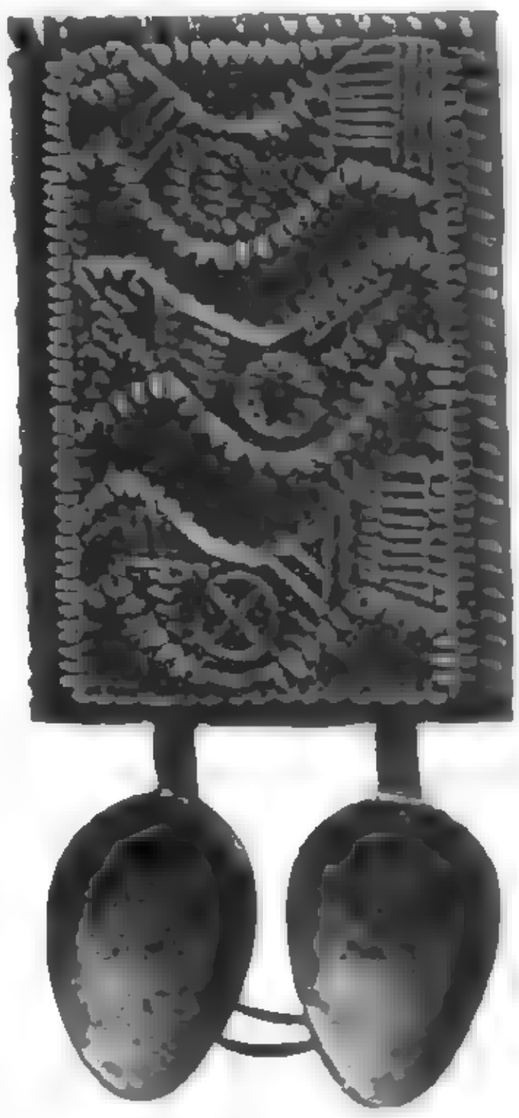
A CLEVER OPERATION.

I HAD the misfortune to break my arm a little over a year ago, and through the unsuccessful treatment of several doctors it was in danger of amputation. However, a few months back I was fortunate enough to get into the hands of a doctor, who saved it for me by means of two silver plates and eight screws, which are fixed right into the bone. The x-ray photo. herewith gives a good idea of this very clever operation, though all the screws are not visible. I now feel no pain or inconvenience whatever, and am able to follow my occupation as a hair-dresser.—Mr. F. Jarvis, 1, Kemble Street, Drury Lane, London, W.C.



A BRIDAL SPOON.

THIS curious spoon, with its two joined bowls, is to be seen in the museum of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society at Carmarthen. It is known as a bridal spoon, and was formerly used in the county, on the eve of their marriage, by the bride and bridegroom, who, if they could, both together, drink out of the two bowls, without spilling any of the contents, would have a happy married life. If, on the contrary, they spilled any of the liquor, misfortune and unhappiness would be their lot. As may be imagined, the spoon is the object of many witticisms on the part of visitors to the museum.—Mr. S. D. Phillips, Mair Studio, St. Clears, Wales.



Answers to Last Month's Quaint Questions.

5. Four feet.

6. Eve was right. Mr. Green would have paid 10s. 10d. Adam received 10s. 4d.

7. Fourteen rugs.

8. Easter Sunday is April 14th. March 3rd is a Sunday.

9. $1\frac{1}{4}$ pints. The proportion of solution to water was 1 to 2 instead of 1 to 3.

10. The girl who multiplies first by 4 saves the multiplication of farthings in the second operation, and should have been awarded marks for better working.

11. $9\ \frac{15}{456184}$ inches.

12. Eighty days.

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"ONCE FAIRLY OUT ON A ROUND, IT WOULD TAKE THE CRACK OF DOOM TO STOP A TRUE GOLFER."

(*See page* 369.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. xlv. APRIL, 1913. No. 268.

THE POISON BELT.

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

Illustrated by Harry Rountree.

Being an account of another amazing adventure of Professor George E. Challenger, Lord John Roxton, Professor Summerlee, and Mr. E. D. Malone, the discoverers of "The Lost World."

SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST INSTALMENT.

Professor Challenger has invited his old friends, Lord John Roxton, Professor Summerlee, and E. D. Malone, to spend a day with him at his home in Sussex, and while journeying down they eagerly discuss the news that a mysterious and universal outbreak of illness has occurred among the natives of Sumatra, and that the lighthouses are all dark in the Straits of Sunda. They are doubly interested in the news as Challenger himself has a letter on the subject in that morning's *Times*. His theory, as he explains when he meets them, is that the world has swum into a stratum, or poison belt, of ether, and that the fate which has befallen the Sumatran natives will quickly overtake the rest of the earth's inhabitants. "It is," he says, "in my opinion, the end of the world."

CHAPTER II. (*continued*).

THE end of the world! Our eyes turned to the great bow-window and we looked out at the summer beauty of the countryside, the long slopes of heather, the great country houses, the cosy farms, the pleasure-seekers upon the links. The end of the world! One had often heard the words, but the idea that they could ever have an immediate practical significance, that it should not be at some vague distant date, but now, to-day, that was a tremendous, a staggering thought. We were all struck solemn and waited in silence for Challenger to continue. His overpowering presence and appearance lent such force to the solemnity of his words that for a moment all the absurdities of the man vanished, and he loomed before us as something majestic and beyond the range of ordinary humanity. Then to me, at least, there came back the cheering recollection of how twice since we had entered the room he had roared with laughter. Surely, I thought, there are limits to mental detachment. The crisis cannot be so great or so pressing, after all.

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"You will conceive a bunch of grapes," said he, "which are covered by some infinitesimal bacillus. The gardener passes it through a disinfectant medium. It may be that he desires his grapes to be cleaner. It may be that he needs space to breed some fresh bacillus. He dips into the poison and they are gone. Our Gardener is, in my opinion, about to dip the solar system, and the human bacillus will be sterilized out of existence."

Again there was silence. It was broken by the high trill of the telephone-bell.

"There is one of our bacilli squeaking for help," said he, with a grim smile.

He was gone from the room for a minute or two. I remember that none of us spoke in his absence. The situation seemed beyond all words or comments.

"The medical officer of health for Brighton," said he, when he returned. "The symptoms are for some reason developing more rapidly upon the sea-level. Our seven hundred feet of elevation give us an advantage. Folk seem to have learned that I am the first authority upon the question. No doubt it comes from my letter in the *Times*. That was the mayor of a provincial town with whom I talked when we first arrived. He seemed to put an entirely inflated value upon his own life. I helped him to readjust his ideas."

Summerlee had risen and was standing by the window. His thin, bony hands were trembling with his emotion.

"Challenger," said he, earnestly, "this thing is too serious for mere futile argument. Do not suppose that I desire to irritate you by any question I may ask. But I put it to you whether there may not be some fallacy in your information or in your reasoning. There is the sun shining as brightly as ever in a blue sky. There are the heather and the flowers and the birds. There are the folk enjoying themselves upon the golf-links, and the labourers yonder cutting the corn. You tell us that they and we may be upon the very brink of destruction—that this sunlit day may be that day of doom which the human race has so long awaited. So far as we know, you found this tremendous judgment upon what? Upon some abnormal lines in a spectrum—upon rumours from Sumatra—upon some curious personal excitement which we have discerned in each other. This latter symptom is not so marked but that you and we could, by a deliberate effort, control it. You need not stand on ceremony with us, Challenger. We have all faced death together before now. Speak out, and let us know exactly where we stand and what, in your opinion, are our prospects for our future."

It was a brave, good speech, a speech from that staunch and strong spirit which lay behind all the acidities and angularities of the old zoologist. Lord John rose and shook him by the hand.

"My sentiment to a tick," said he. "Now, Challenger, it's up to you to tell us where we are. We ain't nervous folk, as you know well; but when it comes to makin' a week-end visit and finding you've run full butt into the Day of Judgment, it wants a bit of explainin'. What's the danger, and how much of it is there, and what are we goin' to do to meet it?"

He stood, tall and strong, in the sunshine at the window, with his brown hand upon the shoulder of Summerlee. I was lying back in an arm-chair, an extinguished cigarette between my lips, in that sort of half-dazed state in which impressions become exceedingly distinct. It may have been a new phase of the poisoning, but the delirious promptings had all passed away, and were succeeded by an exceedingly languid and, at the same time, perceptive state of mind. I was a spectator. It did not seem to be any personal concern of mine. But here were three strong men at a great crisis, and it was fascinating to observe them. Challenger bent his heavy brows and stroked his beard before he answered. One could see that he was very carefully weighing his words.

"What was the last news when you left London?" he asked.

"I was at the *Gazette* office about ten," said I. "There was a Reuter just come in from Singapore to the effect that the sickness seemed to be universal in Sumatra, and that the lighthouses had not been lit in consequence."

"Events have been moving somewhat rapidly since then," said Challenger, picking up his pile of telegrams. "I am in close touch both with the authorities and with the Press, so that news is converging upon me from all parts. There is, in fact, a general and very insistent demand that I should come to London; but I see no good end to be served. From the accounts the poisonous effect begins with mental excitement; the rioting in Paris this morning is said to have been very violent, and the Welsh collieries are in a state of uproar. So far as the evidence to hand can be trusted, this stimulative stage, which varies much in races and in individuals, is succeeded by a certain exalta-

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tion and mental lucidity—I seem to discern some signs of it in our young friend here—which, after an appreciable interval, turns to coma, which deepens rapidly into death. I fancy, so far as my toxicology carries me, that there are some vegetable nerve poisons——"

"Datura," suggested Summerlee.

"Excellent!" cried Challenger. "It would make for scientific precision if we named our toxic agent. Let it be daturon. To you, my dear Summerlee, belongs the honour—posthumous, alas! but none the less unique—of having given a name to the universal destroyer, the great Gardener's disinfectant. The symptoms of daturon, then, may be taken to be such as I indicate. That it will involve the whole world and that no life can possibly remain behind seems to me to be certain, since ether is a universal medium. Up to now it has been capricious in the places which it has attacked, but the difference is only a matter of a few hours, and it is like an advancing tide which covers one strip of sand and then another, running hither and thither in irregular streams, until at last it has submerged it all. There are laws at work in connection with the action and distribution of daturon which would have been of deep interest had the time at our disposal permitted us to study them. So far as I can trace them"—here he glanced over his telegrams—"the less developed races have been the first to respond to its influence. There are deplorable accounts from Africa, and the Australian aborigines appear to have been already exterminated. The Northern races have as yet shown greater resisting power than the Southern. This, you see, is dated from Marseilles at nine-forty-five this morning. I give it to you verbatim:—

"'All night delirious excitement throughout Provence. Tumult of vine growers at Nîmes. Socialistic upheaval at Toulon. Sudden illness attended by coma attacked population this morning. *Peste foudroyant.* Great numbers of dead in the streets. Paralysis of business and universal chaos.'

"An hour later came the following, from the same source:—

"'We are threatened with utter extermination. Cathedral and churches full to overflowing. The dead outnumber the living. It is inconceivable and horrible. Decease seems to be painless, but swift and inevitable.'

"There is a similar telegram from Paris, where the development is not yet as acute. India and Persia appear to be utterly wiped out. The Slavonic population of Austria is down, while the Teutonic has hardly been affected. Speaking generally, the dwellers upon the plains and upon the seashore seem, so far as my limited information goes, to have felt the effects more rapidly than those inland or on the heights. Even a little elevation makes a considerable difference, and perhaps if there be a survivor of the human race, he will again be found upon the summit of some Ararat. Even our own little hill here may presently prove to be a temporary island amid a sea of disaster. But at the present rate of advance a few short hours will submerge us all."

Lord John Roxton wiped his brow.

"What beats me," said he, "is how you could sit there laughin' with that stack of telegrams under your hand. I've seen death as often as most folk; but universal death—it's awful!"

"As to the laughter," said Challenger, "you will bear in mind that, like yourselves, I have not been exempt from the stimulating cerebral effects of the etheric poison. But as to the horror with which universal death appears to inspire you, I would put it to you that it is somewhat exaggerated. If you were sent to sea alone in an open boat to some unknown destination, your heart might well sink within you. The isolation, the uncertainty, would oppress you. But if your voyage were made in a goodly ship, which bore within it all your relations and your friends, you would feel that, however uncertain your destination might still remain, you would at least have one common and simultaneous experience which would hold you to the end in the same close communion. A lonely death may be terrible, but a universal one, as painless as this would appear to be, is not, in my judgment, a matter for apprehension. Indeed, I could sympathize with the person who took the view that the horror lay in the idea of surviving when all that is learned, famous, and exalted had passed away."

"What, then, do you propose to do?" asked Summerlee, who had for once nodded his assent to the reasoning of his brother scientist.

"To take our lunch," said Challenger, as the boom of a gong sounded through the house. "We have a cook whose omelettes are only excelled by her cutlets. We can but trust that no cosmic disturbance has dulled her excellent abilities. My Scharzberger of '96 must also be rescued, so far as our united efforts can do it, from what would be a deplorable waste of a great vintage." He levered his great bul : off the desk, upon which

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"CATHEDRAL AND CHURCHES ARE FULL TO OVERFLOWING. THE DEAD OUTNUMBER THE LIVING."

he had sat while he announced the doom of the planet. "Come," said he, "If there is little time left, there is the more need that we should spend it in sober and reasonable enjoyment."

And, indeed, it proved to be a very merry meal. Do not think us flippant, my good reader. The full solemnity of the event loomed ever at the back of our minds and tempered our thoughts. But surely it is the

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soul which has never faced Death which shies strongly from it at the end. To each of us men it had, for one great epoch in our lives, been a familiar presence. As to the lady, she leaned upon the strong guidance of her mighty husband and was well content to go whither his path might lead. The future was with Fate. The present was our own. We passed it in goody comradeship and gentle merriment. Our minds were, as I have said, singularly lucid. Even I struck sparks at times. As to Challenger, he was wonderful! Never have I so realized the elemental greatness of the man, the sweep and power of his understanding. Summerlee drew him on with his chorus of subacid criticism, while Lord John and I laughed at the contest; and the lady, her hand upon his sleeve, controlled the bellowings of the philosopher. Life, death, fate, the destiny of man—these were the stupendous subjects of that memorable hour, made vital by the fact that as the meal progressed strange, sudden exaltations in my mind and tinglings in my limbs proclaimed that the invisible tide of Death was slowly and gently rising around us. Once I saw Lord John put his hand suddenly to his eyes, and once Summerlee dropped back for an instant in his chair. Each breath we breathed was charged with strange forces. And yet our minds were happy and at ease. Presently Austin laid the cigarettes upon the table and was about to withdraw.

"Austin!" said his master.

"Yes, sir?"

"I thank you for your faithful service."

A smile stole over the servant's gnarled face.

"I've done my duty, sir."

"I'm expecting the end of the world to-day, Austin."

"Yes, sir. What time, sir?"

"I can't say, Austin. Before evening."

"Very good, sir."

The taciturn Austin saluted and withdrew. Challenger lit a cigarette, and, drawing his chair closer to his wife's, he took her hand in his.

"You know how matters stand, dear," said he. "I have explained it also to our friends here. You're not afraid, are you?"

"It won't be painful, George?"

"No more than laughing-gas at the dentist's. Every time you have had it you have practically died."

"But that is a pleasant sensation."

"So may death be. The worn-out bodily machine can't record its impression, but we know the mental pleasure which lies in a dream or a trance. Nature may build a beautiful door and hang it with many a gauzy and shimmering curtain to make an entrance to the new life for our wondering souls. In all my probings of the actual, I have always found wisdom and kindness at the core; and if ever the frightened mortal needs tenderness, it is surely as he makes the passage perilous from life to life. No, Summerlee, I will have none of your materialism, for I, at least, am too great a thing to end in mere physical constituents, a packet of salts and three bucketfuls of water. Here—here"—and he beat his great head with his huge, hairy fist—"there is something which uses matter, but is not of it—something which might destroy Death, but which Death can never destroy."

"Same here!" said Lord John. "I'm a Christian of sorts, but it seems to me there was somethin' mighty natural in those ancestors of ours, who were buried with their axes and bows and arrows and the like, same as if they were livin' on just the same as they used to. I don't know," he added, looking round the table in a shamefaced way, "that I wouldn't feel more homely myself if I was put away with my old ·450 Express and the fowlin'-piece, the shorter one with the rubbered stock, and a clip or two of cartridges—just a fool's fancy, of course, but there it is. How does it strike you, Herr Professor?"

"Well," said Summerlee, "since you ask me, it strikes me as an indefensible throwback to the Stone Age or before it. I'm of the twentieth century, and would wish to die like a civilized man. I don't know that I am more afraid of death than the rest of you, for I am an oldish man, and, come what may, I can't have very much longer to live; but it is all against my nature to sit waiting without a struggle like a sheep for the butcher. Is it quite certain, Challenger, that there is nothing we can do?"

"To save us nothing," said Challenger. "To prolong our lives a few hours, and thus to see the evolution of this mighty tragedy before we are actually involved in it—that may prove to be within my powers. I have taken certain steps——"

"The oxygen?"

"Exactly. The oxygen."

"But what can oxygen effect in the face of a poisoning of the ether? There is not a greater difference in quality between a brickbat and a gas than there is between oxygen and ether. They are different planes of matter. They cannot impinge upon one

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another. Come, Challenger, you could not defend such a proposition."

"My good Summerlee, this etheric poison is most certainly influenced by material agents. We see it in the methods and distribution of the outbreak. We should not *a priori* have expected it, but it is undoubtedly a fact. Hence I am strongly of opinion that a gas like oxygen, which increases the vitality and the resisting power of the body, would be extremely likely to delay the action of what you have so happily named the daturon. It may be that I am mistaken, but I have every confidence in the correctness of my reasoning."

"Well," said Lord John, "if we've got to sit suckin' at those tubes like so many babies with their bottles, I'm not takin' any."

"There will be no need for that," Challenger answered. "We have made arrangements—it is to my wife that you chiefly owe it—that her boudoir shall be made as airtight as is practicable. With matting and varnished paper——"

"Good heavens, Challenger, you don't suppose you can keep out ether with varnished paper?"

"Really, my worthy friend, you are a trifle perverse in missing the point. It is not to keep out the ether that we have gone to such trouble. It is to keep in the oxygen. I trust that if we can ensure an atmosphere hyper-oxygenated to a certain point, we may be able to retain our senses. I had two tubes of the gas and you have brought me three more. It is not much, but it is something."

"How long will they last?"

"I have not an idea. We will not turn them on until our symptoms become unbearable. Then we shall dole the gas out as it is urgently needed. It may give us some hours, possibly even some days, on which we may look out upon a blasted world. Our own fate is delayed to that extent, and we will have the very singular experience, we five, of being, in all probability, the absolute rearguard of the human race upon its march into the unknown. Perhaps you will be kind enough now to give me a hand with the cylinders. It seems to me that the atmosphere already grows somewhat more oppressive."

CHAPTER III.

SUBMERGED.

THE chamber which was destined to be the scene of our unforgettable experience was a charmingly feminine sitting-room, some fourteen or sixteen feet square. At the end of it, divided by a curtain of red velvet, was a small apartment which formed the Professor's dressing-room. This in turn opened into a large bedroom. The curtain was still hanging, but the boudoir and dressing-room were practically one chamber for the purposes of our experiment. One door and the window-frame had been plastered round with varnished paper, so as to be practically sealed. Above the other door, which opened on to the landing, there hung a fanlight which could be drawn by a cord when some ventilation became absolutely necessary. A large shrub in a tub stood in each corner.

"How to get rid of our excessive carbonic dioxide without unduly wasting our oxygen is a delicate and vital question," said Challenger, looking round him after the five iron tubes had been laid side by side against the wall. "With longer time for preparation I could have brought the whole concentrated force of my intelligence to bear more fully upon the problem, but as it is we must do what we can. The shrubs will be of some small service. Two of the oxygen tubes are ready to be turned on at an instant's notice, so that we cannot be taken unawares. At the same time, it would be well not to go far from the room, as the crisis may be a sudden and urgent one."

There was a broad, low window opening out upon a balcony. The view beyond was the same as that which we had already admired from the study. Looking out, I could see no sign of disorder anywhere. There was a road curving down the side of the hill, under my very eyes. A cab from the station, one of those prehistoric survivals which are only to be found in our country villages, was toiling slowly up the hill. Lower down was a nurse-girl, wheeling a perambulator and leading a second child by the hand. The blue reeks of smoke from the cottages gave the whole widespread landscape an air of settled order and homely comfort. Nowhere in the blue heaven or on the sunlit earth was there any foreshadowing of a catastrophe. The harvesters were back in the fields once more and the golfers, in pairs and fours, were still streaming round the links. There was so strange a turmoil within my own head, and such a jangling of my overstrung nerves, that the indifference of these people was amazing.

"Those fellows don't seem to feel any ill effects," said I, pointing down at the links.

"Have you played golf?" asked Lord John.

"No, I have not."

"Well, young fellah, when you do you'll

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learn that once fairly out on a round, it would take the crack of doom to stop a true golfer. Halloa! There's that telephone-bell again."

From time to time during and after lunch the high, insistent ring had summoned the Professor. He gave us the news as it came through to him in a few curt sentences. Such terrific items had never been registered in the world's history before. The great shadow was creeping up from the South like a rising tide of death. Egypt had gone through its delirium and was now comatose. Spain and Portugal, after a wild frenzy in which the Clericals and the Anarchists had fought most desperately, were now fallen silent. No cable messages were received any longer from South America. In North America the Southern States, after some terrible racial rioting, had succumbed to the poison. North of Maryland the effect was not yet marked, and in Canada it was hardly perceptible. Belgium, Holland, and Denmark



"RUSHING AND SNORTING LIKE A WOUNDED BUFFALO, CHALLENGER DASHED PAST ME."

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had each in turn been affected. Despairing messages were flashing from every quarter to the great centres of learning, to the chemists and the doctors of world-wide repute, imploring their advice. The astronomers, too, were deluged with inquiries. Nothing could be done. The thing was universal and beyond our human knowledge or control. It was death—painless but inevitable—death for young and old, for weak and strong, for rich and poor, without hope or possibility of escape. Such was the news which, in scattered, distracted messages, the telephones had brought us. The great cities already knew their fate, and so far as we could gather were preparing to meet it with dignity and resignation. Yet here were our golfers and labourers like the lambs who gambol under the shadow of the knife. It seemed amazing. And yet how could they know? It had all come upon us in one giant stride. What was there in the morning paper to alarm them? And now it was but three in the afternoon. Even as we looked some rumour seemed to have spread, for we saw the reapers hurrying from the fields. Some of the golfers were returning to the club-house. They were running as if taking refuge from a shower. Their little caddies trailed behind them. Others were continuing their game. The nurse had turned and was pushing her perambulator hurriedly up the hill again. I noticed that she had her hand to her brow. The cab had stopped and the tired horse, with his head sunk to his knees, was resting. Above there was a perfect summer sky—one huge vault of unbroken blue, save for a few fleecy white clouds over the distant downs. If the human race must die to-day, it was at least upon a glorious death-bed. And yet all that gentle loveliness of Nature made this terrific and wholesale destruction the more pitiable and awful. Surely it was too goodly a residence that we should be so swiftly, so terribly, evicted from it!

But I have said that the telephone-bell had rung once more. Suddenly I heard Challenger's tremendous voice from the hall.

"Malone!" he cried. "You are wanted."

I rushed down to the instrument. It was McArdle speaking from London.

"That you, Mr. Malone?" cried his familiar voice. "Mr. Malone, for God's sake, see if Professor Challenger can suggest anything that can be done."

"He can suggest nothing, sir," I answered. "He regards the crisis as universal and inevitable. We have some oxygen here, but it can only defer our fate for a few hours."

"Oxygen!" cried the voice. "There is no time to get any. The office has been a perfect pandemonium all morning. Now half of the staff are insensible. I am weighed down with heaviness myself. From my window I can see the people lying thick in Fleet Street. Judging by the last telegrams, the whole world——"

His voice had been sinking, and suddenly stopped. An instant later I heard through the telephone a muffled thud, as if his head had fallen forward on the desk.

"Mr. McArdle!" I cried. "Mr. McArdle!"

There was no answer. I knew as I replaced the receiver that his voice had been stilled for ever.

At that instant, just as I took a step backwards from the telephone, the thing was on us. It was as if we were bathers, up to our shoulders in water, who suddenly are submerged by a rolling wave. An invisible hand seemed to have quietly closed round my throat and to be gently pressing the life from me. I was conscious of immense oppression upon my chest, great tightness within my head, a loud singing in my ears, and bright flashes before my eyes. I staggered to the balustrades of the stair. At the same moment, rushing and snorting like a wounded buffalo, Challenger dashed past me, a terrible vision, with red-purple face, engorged eyes, and bristling hair. His little wife, insensible to all appearance, was slung over his great shoulder, and he blundered and thundered up the stair, scrambling and tripping, but carrying himself and her through sheer will-force through that mephitic atmosphere to the haven of temporary safety. At the sight of his effort I, too, rushed up the steps, clambering, falling, clutching at the rail, until I tumbled half senseless upon my face on the upper landing. Lord John's fingers of steel were in the collar of my coat, and a moment later I was stretched upon my back, unable to speak or move, on the boudoir carpet. The woman lay beside me, and Summerlee was bunched in a chair by the window, his head nearly touching his knees. As in a dream I saw Challenger, like a monstrous beetle, crawling slowly across the floor, and a moment later I heard the gentle hissing of the escaping oxygen. Challenger breathed two or three times with enormous gulps, his lungs roaring as he drew in the vital gas.

"It works!" he cried, exultantly. "My reasoning has been justified!" He was up on his feet again, alert and strong. With a tube in his hand he rushed over to his wife and held it to her face. In a few seconds she

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moaned, stirred, and sat up. He turned to me, and I felt the tide of life stealing warmly through my arteries. My reason told me that it was but a little respite, and yet, carelessly as we talk of its value, every hour of existence now seemed an inestimable thing.



"CHALLENGER BREATHED TWO OR THREE TIMES WITH ENORMOUS GULPS."

Never have I known such a thrill of sensuous joy as came with that freshet of life. The weight fell away from my lungs, the band loosened from my brow, a sweet feeling of peace and gentle, languid comfort stole over me. I lay watching Summerlee revive under the same remedy, and finally Lord John took his turn. He sprang to his feet and gave me a hand to rise, while Challenger picked up his wife and laid her on the settee.

"Oh, George, I am so sorry you brought me back," she said, holding him by the hand. "The door of death is indeed, as you said, hung with beautiful, shimmering curtains; for, once the choking feeling had passed, it was all unspeakably soothing and beautiful. Why have you dragged me back?"

"Because I wish that we make the passage together. We have been together so many years. It would be sad to fall apart at the supreme moment."

For a moment in his tender voice I caught a glimpse of a new Challenger, something

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very far from the bullying, ranting, arrogant man who had alternately amazed and offended his generation. Here in the shadow of death was the innermost Challenger, the man who had won and held a woman's love. Suddenly his mood changed and he was our strong captain once again.

"Alone of all mankind I saw and foretold this catastrophe," said he, with a ring of exultation and scientific triumph in his voice. "As to you, my good Summerlee, I trust your last doubts have been resolved as to the meaning of the blurring of the lines in the spectrum, and that you will no longer contend that my letter in the *Times* was based upon a delusion."

For once our pugnacious colleague was deaf to a challenge. He could but sit gasping and stretching his long, thin limbs, as if to assure himself that he was still really upon this planet. Challenger walked across to the oxygen tube, and the sound of the loud hissing fell away till it was the most gentle sibilation.

"We must husband our supply of the gas," said he. "The atmosphere of the room is now strongly hyper-oxygenated, and I take it that none of us feel any distressing symptoms. We can only determine by actual experiments what amount added to the air will serve to neutralize the poison. Let us see how that will do."

We sat in silent nervous tension for five minutes or more, observing our own sensations. I had just begun to fancy that I felt the constriction round my temples again when Mrs. Challenger called out from the sofa that she was fainting. Her husband turned on more gas.

"In pre-scientific days," said he, "they used to keep a white mouse in every submarine, as its delicate organization gave signs of a vicious atmosphere before it was perceived by the sailors. You, my dear, will be our white mouse. I have now increased the supply and you are better."

"Yes, I am better."

"Possibly we have hit upon the correct mixture. When we have ascertained exactly how little will serve we shall be able to compute how long we shall be able to exist. Unfortunately, in resuscitating ourselves we have already consumed a considerable proportion of this first tube."

"Does it matter?" asked Lord John, who was standing with his hands in his pockets close to the window. "If we have to go, what is the use of holdin' on? You don't suppose there's any chance for us?"

Challenger smiled and shook his head.

"Well, then, don't you think there is more dignity in takin' the jump and not waitin' to be pushed in? If it must be so I'm for sayin' our prayers, turnin' off the gas, and openin' the window."

"Why not?" said the lady, bravely. "Surely, George, Lord John is right and it is better so."

"I most strongly object," cried Summerlee, in a querulous voice. "When we must die let us by all means die; but to deliberately anticipate death seems to me to be a foolish and unjustifiable action."

"What does our young friend say to it?" asked Challenger.

"I think we should see it to the end."

"And I am strongly of the same opinion," said he.

"Then, George, if you say so, I think so too," cried the lady.

"Well, well, I'm only puttin' it as an argument," said Lord John. "If you all want to see it through I am with you. It's doosed interestin', and no mistake about that. I've had my share of adventures in my life, and as many thrills as most folk, but I'm endin' on my top note."

"Granting the continuity of life," said Challenger, in his most didactic manner, "none of us can predicate what opportunities of observation one may have from what we may call the spirit plane to the p ane of matter. It surely must be evident to the most obtuse person that it is while we are ourselves material that we are most fitted to watch and form a judgment upon material phenomena. Therefore it is only by keeping alive for these few extra hours that we can hope to carry on with us to some future existence a clear conception of the most stupendous event that the world, or the universe so far as we know it, has ever encountered. To me it would seem a deplorable thing that we should in any way curtail by so much as a minute so wonderful an experience."

"I am strongly of the same opinion," cried Summerlee.

"Carried without a division," said Lord John. "By George, that poor devil of a chauffeur of yours down in the yard there has made his last journey. No use makin' a sally and bringin' him in?"

"It would be absolute madness," cried Summerlee.

"Well, I suppose it would," said Lord John. "It couldn't help him and would scatter our gas all over the house, even if we ever got back alive. My word, look

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at the little birds under the trees!"

We drew four chairs up to the long, low window, the lady still resting with closed eyes upon the settee. I remember that the monstrous and grotesque idea crossed my mind—the illusion may have been heightened by the heavy stuffiness of the air which we were breathing—that we were in four front seats of the stalls at the last act of the drama of the world.



"THE CHAUFFEUR DOWN IN THE YARD HAD MADE HIS LAST JOURNEY."

(To be continued.)

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STORIES HEARD AND TOLD

BY

Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree.

[Concerning this article, which he has been kind enough to revise, the eminent actor-manager writes: "It appears that at odd moments — at meetings, social gatherings, and among theatrical friends — I have been guilty of endeavouring to amuse by relating anecdotes of persons and incidents in my career. These my friend the writer has, with assiduity somewhat flattering to myself, carefully preserved. I fear I cannot accept responsibility for all the stories related here, as, although I may have told them, or heard them told from time to time by friends, they cover such a long period that I cannot remember the circumstances in which some of them first gained publicity. However, they may not be deemed by readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE less interesting or amusing on that account."]

Illustrated by H. M. Brock, R.I.

"I HAVE often been tempted by biographical publishers," Sir Herbert Tree recently remarked, "who have assailed me to write my memoirs; but so far I have successfully resisted their blandishments and even the entreaties of my daughter Viola.

"'Dear Father,' she wrote from Milan not long ago, 'do write your reminiscences. They will be intensely interesting. Write them all about other people, then they will be interested in you.'"

Neither is this the only example of his daughter's somewhat caustic humour which Sir Herbert has given us. A short time ago he signed a document instructing that he should be cremated after death. When informing his daughter of this fact Sir Herbert wrote and said: "I will send you a beautiful urn holding my ashes."

To which she replied: "Dear Father,—That will be a dreadful day – a nasty jar for me!"

With regard to the writing of memoirs, however, Sir Herbert says that he always considered there are two signs of advancing age. One when people say to you, "How young you are looking"; the other when publishers write to suggest that you should write your autobiography. He thinks, however, that he has said all he has got to say about himself and other people to the interviewer. "At first," Sir Herbert confesses, "the interviewer filled me with trepidation, but I have now learned something. All you have got to do is to look intelligent, give the interviewer a good time, and allow him to say a number of smart things. You'll really be surprised at yourself when the interview appears."

Apart, however, from his material interest as a theatrical man, Sir Herbert confesses that he has an individual and personal interest in the Press. Indeed, he once started a journal. It was on board an Atlantic liner, and he threatened to fill it with paragraphs attacking the reputations of prominent people on board unless they bought off the paragraphs in the cause of charity.

"The richest man on board,"



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says Sir Herbert, "was an American 'boss,' and I hinted at the publication of dark passages in his career unless he subscribed handsomely. He agreed to do so, after making some pointed remarks about blackmail.

"Well, we were so successful in our efforts that every paragraph was bought up, and we were free from any expense of printing. The newspaper was published, but it was a white sheet — the white sheet of blameless lines. On the night of the concert, at the close, there was a dramatic pause, and I said: 'Now we will have the chief contribution.' The man of millions stepped forward and handed me an envelope. I opened it and found inside a one-cent piece — the smallest coin, I believe, known to the American Mint. Turning to the 'boss,' I said:—

"'Sir, what does this mean?'

"'My boy,' answered he, with great humour, 'that is all my reputation is worth.'

"Millionaires are too much for the ordinary man."

As a matter of fact, there are those who consider that Sir Herbert Tree has missed his vocation. One evening, during the run of "King John," he remarked to a friend at the Garrick Club:—

"Is it not strange that I should be appearing in two places at once in my new production? I shall be on at the Palace in the cinematograph and at the same time on the stage at His Majesty's."

"I shall go to the Palace for choice," said the candid friend, "for then I sha'n't have to listen to the words."

"You would not understand them if you did, my friend," Sir Herbert retorted.

"Well, no, perhaps not, as you speak 'em," was the genial reply.

Then there was the Gaelic guide with whom Sir Herbert got into conversation while on a provincial tour. During his week's visit a Scotch "divine" had attacked the stage in no measured terms.

"And what may you do for a living?" he asked.

"I?" replied the actor-manager, a little taken aback. "Oh, I'm on the stage."

"Circus or handbell-ringer?"

He explained that he was neither, and added: "My work is more serious than that."

The man eyed him doubtfully. "Ah, well," he said, at length, in a tone of intense disappointment, "it seems to me you are no' much better than a meenister."

"Sir, what does this mean?"



Here are two other stories which Sir Herbert tells against himself. A few years ago he paid a visit to Dublin. He was about to enter a cab at the station when he was approached by a seedy individual, claiming to be an old actor, who asked him for a "tip." To get rid of him Sir Herbert handed him a shilling.

"Ah, Sir Herbert," said the man, with a disappointed air, "I thought you would make it four."

"Why four?" was the puzzled query.

"Well, sir, when Irving was here he gave me two shillings, sir, and sure you're twice as good an actor as him—in your own estimation," he added, sharply, as Sir Herbert ordered the cabby to drive away.

And it was while walking down the Haymarket recently that Sir Herbert was accosted by a perfect stranger.

"Begging your pardon, sir," said the latter, "but aren't you Beerbohm Tree, the actor?"

"No, certainly not," replied Sir Herbert, unblushingly.

"I'm very sorry," said the other, "but I thought you were. You look so much like the pictures I have seen of him."

"I strongly resent the insinuation," persisted Sir Herbert.

"Well, I didn't mean to insult you, sir," observed the stranger, apologetically.

But while certain people have thus expressed their candid views regarding Sir Herbert, he has been no less candid in regard to others. And at the present time, when

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the critics are applauding or deriding, according to individual tastes, the extraordinary work of artists who describe themselves as post-impressionists, the following story which the actor-manager tells is particularly interesting and not without its point and humour.

"I have never understood many things," he says. "In particular, post-impressionism is a thing that has baffled me. I believe it was that brilliant man, Mr. Comyns Carr, who said that post-impressionism is the temporary paradise of the charlatan. My first lesson in post-impressionism was from a goose-herd many years ago at a school in Germany, and he used to paint exactly the pictures I see now in the galleries of the advanced post-impressionists. He was, indeed, the father of post-impressionism—or shall I say, post-depressionism? He had a great conscience about it, and never painted anything under a king or a prince or a princess. But one day I tempted him, with the twopence a week which was allowed me for toffee, to paint a colonel. It was a great social descent for him, and he confided in me that he considered it only as a 'pot-boiler.'"

"I thought you would make it four"



There was also an occasion when a famous musical comedy "star," a handsome creature, who was wont to display more of her handsome self than of her mediocre talent, was a counter-attraction on one of Sir Herbert's visits to Dublin, and someone said that he could not understand Tree's poor success, as she had played to crowded houses.

"Ah," said Tree, "Art cannot compete with Nature."

This, however, is not the only example of Sir Herbert's caustic humour. Once he was present at a supper where a talented but somewhat effusive Sicilian actor was an honoured and much-fêted guest. When the banquet was over and everyone was departing, the actor was so confused and carried away by the attentions which had been showered upon him that he directed his taxi-driver to drive him to the stage-door of the theatre at which he was playing.

"What on earth does he want to go back to the theatre for at this time of night?" asked one of those who were waving him adieu.

"Ah," said Sir Herbert Tree, "I expect he has forgotten to kiss the fireman!"

And he thus reproved a young man at a dinner-party one night, who had been attempting wit at the expense of his neighbours.

"Why not palliate the pangs of conversational vivisection with the chloroform of courtesy?" asked Sir Herbert, in an undertone. Then he added, as the youth showed signs of smarting under the polite lash: "You know, a man is allowed to think, but not aloud."

More amusing, perhaps, is the story of an incident which took place one day when Sir Herbert was standing on the steps of the Ritz Hotel, Paris. A fussy French journalist, who mistook him for Lord Rosebery, approached him and said:—

"Sir Rosebery, one word, if you please, for

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my paper; one word, Sir Rosebery, about your interview with Lord Campbell Bannerman."

Waving his hand in a lordly manner, Sir Herbert solemnly said :—

"Death opens the door for peace to enter in."

The next morning the reporter's paper in question contained a long article on the portentous "opinion."

No less a personage than Mr. Hall Caine, however, was once made the butt of one of Sir Herbert's little jokes. The famous novelist wished to secure a certain effect in "The Eternal City." Miss Constance Collier played Roma, and Mr. Caine, anxious to get powerful effect in a certain scene she was taking with the late Robert Taber, said, during a rehearsal :—

"I once saw a very striking bit of business. The man picked up the woman and threw her over his shoulder."

Miss Collier looked at him in consternation, for she would be rather a Venus de Miloesque person to throw about.

"That reminds me," said the actor-manager. "I saw a play once in which the hero caught hold of the heroine by the feet and banged her head on the floor."

"Splendid! A magnificent idea!" interpolated the enthusiastic author. "What was the play?"

"'Punch and Judy,'" replied Sir Herbert.

As becomes a witty man, however, Sir Herbert admires the wit of others. On the occasion of a new production, preceded by a long series of rather wearying rehearsals, one member of the company, who had never had anything but a small part, spoke in so weak a voice when his cue came that Sir Herbert asked, in rather a sarcastic tone: "What's the matter, Mr. X——? Are you saving your voice for the opening night?"

"No, Sir Herbert," was the retort; "I've never been able to save anything under your management."



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"Humour is greater than vulgar truth," said the manager, and doubled the actor's salary.

Occasionally Sir Herbert plays golf. One day he was in particularly bad form on the links, and made such a poor drive that he turned to the caddie and remarked, "Did you ever see worse play than that?" The lad made no answer, and Sir Herbert went on with the game. Presently he made another still worse stroke, which evoked from the actor an exclamation of surprise. "I say," said he again, "did you ever see a worse player?" The caddie remained silent for a moment, and then slowly raised his head. "I heard what ye said," he replied, at last, "and I'm just thinking."

Next to being worried with critics and budding dramatists, perhaps the greatest trouble of a theatrical manager is that of dealing with stage aspirants. One of the funniest letters Sir Herbert ever received from a stage aspirant was as follows:—

"Veneered Sir,—I wish to go on the stage, and I would like to join your valuable theatre. I have been a bricklayer for five years, but having failed in this branch, I have decided to take on acting, it being easier work. I am not young, but am six foot tall without any boots. I have studied Bell's system of elocution, and am fond of late hours.—I remain, humble sir, yours faithfully, E. S."

Another aspirant, a Mohammedan gentleman, recommended himself on the ground that "I can lift a grand piano with my teeth."

In view of the admiring comments which have been made from time to time regarding Sir Herbert's powers of make-up, the following remarks which he made a short time ago during an interview will be read with considerable interest.



"It is the simplest thing in the world to 'make-up' for a character. It is just what you think you are that you become and seem to others—just as the mind is made up. You must bring some imagination to making-up, it is true, and hold yourself in harmony with the picture, whatever it be."

But there are accidents at times. On one occasion, when playing Falstaff at His Majesty's, he seemed to be going into a rapid decline in the clothes-basket scene. His belt began to slip about, and he grew rapidly thinner. Miss Ellen Terry and Mrs. Kendal were convulsed with laughter, and it was then that Sir Herbert realized that the screw had come off the air-pillow which constituted his corpulence.

Sir Herbert confesses, however, that one of the funniest and luckiest events in his career was connected with make-up. It happened on the first night of the production of "The Private Secretary." He was the original curate, and it may be remembered that the piece of blue on the lapel of the Rev. Mr. Spalding's coat was one of the best touches in the make-up of that screamingly funny character.

"That," says Sir Herbert, "was my wife's

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invention. When I was going on I asked her if I should pass muster. At first she said 'Yes,' but then had a happy inspiration. 'You want a bit of blue ribbon,' she said, 'just to finish you off.'

"The call-boy was waiting for me, and there was not a bit of blue ribbon in the theatre, or at any rate none that we could lay hands on. Then my wife had another inspiration. The painters had been busy behind the scenes, and had left a pot of blue paint. She snipped off a piece of material from somewhere or other, dipped it in the blue paint, and dabbed it on the lapel of my coat. Needless to say, the first appearance of 'The Private Secretary' was a tremendous success, and the curate has worn the blue ribbon ever since."

Another of his favourite stories concerns two ladies arriving at a modest country cottage, where they were to be week-end guests, in the midst of a hailstorm. "My dear Mrs. Jones," said the welcoming hostess, "I am glad you've come, but I do hope the weather will clear up, or you won't enjoy yourselves much." "Oh, but, Mrs. Wiles," replied the polite guest, "we didn't come to enjoy ourselves; we came to see you."

The dramatic critic is concerned in a good story told of Sir Herbert's professional *début* over thirty years ago at Folkestone, in the character of Colonel Challice, in "Alone." "I was so nervous," he says, "that I arranged with the prompter to snap my fingers whenever I was forgetting the words. On the first night I snapped often, and felt in consequence very depressed about my performance; but, as a matter of fact, the critics commended my work very highly, calling it artistic and clever. Especially did they note 'his realistic twitching of the fingers and constant attitude of painful listening, traits so characteristic of the blind.'"



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Number Twenty-Seven.

By AUSTIN PHILIPS.

Illustrated by A. C. Michael.

"HANG it all, I wish you weren't going!" said Ferrars, sadly.

"Hang it all, I wish I wasn't, either!" said Lemarchand, whistling cheerfully.

"Sounds like it!" said Ferrars, with a rueful laugh.

"Sorry!"

Lemarchand stopped, waste-paper basket in one hand, in the other a dusty mahogany drawer taken from the Chippendale bureau in his wide, high room. He put down the waste-paper basket, took up a duster, wiped the drawer, replaced it, and looked half-ruefully, half-smilingly at his friend.

"I'm sorry," he began again. "I didn't mean to be so beastly cheerful."

Ferrars sat watching him, glum and downhearted at Lemarchand's going, yet knowing that he (Lemarchand) had more cause than most people for joy. He had eaten overmuch of life's powder; he was now going to taste its jam. Only Ferrars knew what Lemarchand had been through these last three odious years.

Lemarchand had come to Belboro, where he had bought—and had been sold—a "promising nucleus," which proved to be a practice which the seller had worked up to its possible zenith—a paper three hundred—which could be worked up to nothing more. Belboro was a spa—hence Lemarchand's belief in the "promising nucleus"—a spa which was the property of a ring. The baths were in the hands of trustees for an estate in Chancery, and the trustees were in league with the hotels (which were the estate's property), and the old-established doctors were in league with the hotel-keepers, who kept the ring more close. The ring made a fortune out of visitors to the brine baths. The tiny town, with a moribund industry and a three-parts submerged population, provided Lemarchand with practice—and payment deferred.

Lemarchand, a man of real ability, by far the best qualified doctor in Belboro, had struggled valiantly—worse still, had struggled knowing it vain. He had had to convince his father, and his *fiancée's* father, who had thought that he was not doing his best. Now conviction was come to them; they thought more of him for holding on as he had held; they were making amends. And Lemarchand was having his chance. A practice—a real practice—had been bought for him at a big West Country town, and he was going to be married at once. No wonder that he was whistling. It was only Ferrars, writer of fiction and Civil Servant, who felt glum.

"It'll be dull," he said, presently; "oh, beastly dull! I shall miss you more than I can say. One *is* different from the people here, and one speaks a different language, after all."

"Ferrars!"

Lemarchand put down his duster and looked reprovingly at his friend.

"A different language! Learn *theirs*, my dear fellow, and don't talk like a literary prig. Much better make friends with your milkman and try to acquire the elusive 'common touch' which is the 'House Opposite' of literature and life."

"I suppose you're right." Ferrars shrugged doubtful shoulders. "But——"

"Of course I'm right, old man, and you know it, though you don't like what I say. And now, to make up for my straight speaking, I'm going to make you a present."

"A present? But you've just given me your Jacobean corner-cupboard and——"

"I mean," said Lemarchand—"I mean that I am going to give you a short story, ready made."

"That's jolly good of you, but you couldn't tell one."

"Why?"

"You haven't"—Ferrars was quite emphatic—"you're like all these amateur people; you want to fly before you can walk. In other words, you are ignorant of technique."

"Technique!" Lemarchand laughed at him. "D'you think I haven't picked up something in our talks, that I've read for nothing those books that adorn your shelves? No; I'll give you a story that *is* a story——"

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"But"—Ferrars was persistently incredulous—"but of which I shall guess the end."

"I'll bet you those two brass candlesticks on the mantelpiece to that nail-studded bellows at your rooms that you don't. Is that enough?"

"It is. Done with you! Fire ahead! I'll pull you up—when the brass candlesticks are mine!"

"Right! Just half a second, though."

Lemarchand turned to his bureau again, opened the third right-hand drawer of its interior, fumbled for something, pulled out some sheets of paper, rolled and elastic-ringed. Then he came back to the big chair opposite to Ferrars's chair, coughed, cleared his throat, smiled at his guest again, and began:

"It was when I was house physician at Bart's. I remember—oh, most awfully well!—the first time I saw the chap. I'd been dining at the Sports Club with another old Malvernian—Jimmy Bird, the Soccer Blue—and I got back to the hospital about twelve, and just as I turned in I did my duty visit round the wards. I came to Marion Ward first. Everything was in order there. Then I went on to Stanley Ward, on the male side. I found the night nurse sewing by the green-shaded light of the central table at which she sat.

"'Good evening, nurse,' I said.

"'Oh, good evening, Mr. Lemarchand,' said she. Then she lighted a candle, preparatory to taking me round the ward. 'There's a new patient for you,' she went on, 'in Number Twenty-seven. He came in from the out-patients' room this afternoon.'

"When we got to Number Twenty-seven—the last but one on the right—I switched on the light above the patient's head. The new arrival was sleeping. There was not the least tremor of the eyelids; his breathing was regular and deep. He lay on his side. An arm, bare and muscular, made a pillow for his head. A fine head it was, too—large, with massive features, crowned with a shock of curly, coal-black hair. The nose was somewhat aquiline; the chin was strong and prominent. It was distinctly an intellectual face. And yet, even in his sleep, it seemed to me that there was something of the savage about the fellow, something of the brute, and (I said his nose was aquiline) something of the devil, too.

"I looked at him for a couple of minutes or so. He did not stir. I unhooked the notes above his head and got hold of the out-patient letter. Here it is."

Lemarchand ceased playing with the elastic-banded *dossier*, slipped the elastic from it, removed a sheet of paper which he put down carefully on the open flap of the bureau. Then he replaced the elastic and tossed the remainder of the *dossier* into Ferrars's hands.

"That's yours," he went on, "like the tale. You'll find the out-patient letter next the temperature-chart. Got it? That's it, that's it—that blue-paper thing. What's it say?"

"'*Angina Pectoris*. Attack in O.P. room. Admit—urgent.'"

"Exactly. Well, when I'd seen it—that bit of blue paper—I turned to the nurse again.

"'How's he been since they brought him up?' I asked.

"'All right,' she answered. 'We've had no trouble with him. His attack was over then. And he went off to sleep at seven-thirty, Sister told me.'

"'Right,' said I, and I switched off the light and left him. I thought it would be cruel to wake him up so late. There would be time all right for my examination in the morning. The nurse said nothing. We passed out and stood talking in the ward kitchen.

"'That chap's got rather a fine head,' said I.

"'Yes,' she admitted, rather grudgingly. 'Yes, I suppose he has. But I don't like him.'

"'Why?' I asked.

"'I don't know. Instinct, I suppose,' said she.

"Next morning I told my best clerk, a painstaking student of unusual promise, to take the history of the case. You've got the notes there, Ferrars. Chuck 'em here again. I'll give you their gist."

Ferrars passed them. He was smiling rather cynically, but he did not speak. Lemarchand glanced at him, smiled, hid the smile, turned the papers over, rearranged them, spoke again.

"The patient's name was Harry Clayton, and he was forty-three years old, though he looked more. He was unmarried, and had lived in Australia for twenty-five years. He had been a schoolmaster, but had been out of employment for some time past. In fact, he had returned from Australia about a year before, in the hope of finding work in England.

"That is the human part of the *dossier*. As regards the medical side of the case I will give you the clerk's actual words.

"'For the past two and a half years the patient has suffered from very severe attacks of pain in the region of the heart, occurring

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at intervals of varying length. The attacks seize him at different times, and seem to have no relation to heavy exercise or excitement. He sweats, vomits, and says he feels afraid he is about to die. There has been no shortness of breath, no swelling of the feet——' "

Lemarchand stopped, rolled up the paper again, and pursued.

"He was evidently an educated, well-read man. His way of speaking was refined. His voice, however, was rather harsh and loud.

"He was a scholar, too, and linguist. He certainly spoke French, for I tested him myself.

"He said that he had lost his post in Melbourne through the hatred and enmity of a man of high position whom he had unintentionally offended. He was, he said, practically hounded out of Australia. Though I tried my hardest, I was never able to persuade him to tell me more than this.

"His heart was certainly in a condition in which attacks of *angina* would be likely to occur. There was no reason to suspect his story—told, already, in a direct manner. Moreover, while in the out-patients' room he had suffered from an attack about which there could be no doubt.

"In the afternoon Meredith, my chief, visited the wards, and I took him to see Number Twenty-seven.

"'Well,' he said, 'we must wait till he has an attack. Then watch him closely and note his symptoms with care.'

"Then, obviously interested by the fellow's striking personality, and although he had been in an urgent hurry, he sat down by the bedside and began to talk. He stayed there, too—for, I should think, quite half an hour. They spoke of chemistry, at which Meredith rather fancies himself, and Number Twenty-seven had, apparently, amongst other things, taught chemistry in Melbourne."

Lemarchand broke off; he had been speaking with head bent, with eyes upon a swinging foot. He looked up, to see Ferrars smiling cynically as before. And Lemarchand smiled too.

"I hold you all right?" he asked. "I have your interest fixed?"

"Oh, yes! I don't quarrel with your story. But of course I've guessed the end. The chap——"

Lemarchand silenced Ferrars quickly with the wave of a protesting hand.

"You haven't guessed, and you won't guess; and I'll trust you to admit as much presently, and to send those nail-studded bellows along. In the meantime I may as well dash ahead." And Lemarchand proceeded with his tale.

"Well, the new patient certainly had an extraordinary power of arousing interest in people. We all felt it—the resident, the Sister, and the nurses, and now Dr. Meredith himself. Yet in more than one case the interest was hostile—hostile without grounds.

"It was nearly a week after Meredith's first chat with the fellow that I was rung up in the evening, about nine-thirty, to go to Stanley Ward. I found Number Twenty-seven sitting up in bed, writhing, his face distorted and beaded with sweat. His shirt was open, and he clutched convulsively at his bared chest with clenched hands, upon which the blue-black veins were sticking out like great lead-pencils. He groaned loudly, and every now and then the groan increased almost to a shriek, as of a chap in mortal pain and fear.

"'I can't bear it! I can't bear it!' he kept crying. 'Oh, let me die!'

"Well, I clapped an ice-bag on his chest and tried amyl nitrite, but it was no jolly use. Then I gave him morphia. After about an hour's hullaballooing he quietened down gradually, and eventually he slept.

"'Not a bit like true *angina*,' I said, wonderingly, to the Sister, who had not yet gone to bed.

"'No,' she answered. 'And yet he is obviously in terrible agony, poor chap!'

"Just then the night nurse came along. She was a woman of strong prejudices, but as often as not her prejudices were just.

"'I don't trust the man half a yard,' she said. 'I—I believe he brought the attack on.'

"'Oh, come, come, nurse!' I laughed. 'That's going a bit too far. Give the poor chap a chance.'

"But the nurse looked at me and shook her head.

"'I don't trust him a yard,' she repeated. 'I don't trust him a single yard!' And she trotted off down the ward in her quaint little perky way.

"Now, the *padre* had taken the greatest interest in Number Twenty-seven, and the little parson—one of the best—sat with the chap and yarned with him heaps and lent him books, books on geology, in which he seemed specially interested, and also a pocket Horace, by special request. But it was a curious fact, noted by the Sister, that he never read these works except when the parson was in the ward, and *then* he seemed wrapped up in them.

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"'There's something wrong about that man,' said Sister Caldecott to me one day. 'I hate him, and so do the other patients—one and all. I believe Nurse Flemming is right. I believe he could be a perfect fiend incarnate, given the chance. I shall be thankful when he goes. Can't you manage to get rid of him, Mr. Lemarch-and?'

"Well, I thought about things between then and next morning, and spoke to the resident, and he seemed rather to agree with the nurse. Presently—as he had told me he was going to do—he said this to me as he stood at the bottom of Number Twenty-seven's bed:—

"'This man has not had an attack for some time. I should think he might go out in a day or so, and make room for someone else. I want beds very badly indeed.'

"That same night Number Twenty-seven had a third attack—the severest since his admission. I was with him for two solid hours. His screams were awful, and at last I had to resort to chloroform to get him quiet and to give the morphia time to act.



"'THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG ABOUT THAT MAN,' SAID SISTER CALDECOTT TO ME ONE DAY. 'I HATE HIM, AND SO DO THE OTHER PATIENTS.'"

"I have never, either before or since, seen a man so sick. I will spare you the details. The Sister told me that at tea-time he had eaten enormously of bread and butter. Could it, after all, be only indigestion? Could indigestion alone bring on such pains?

"The next day old Dr. Meredith, to whom I had reported this violent attack, went straight to Number Twenty-seven and, having gathered his class round him in a circle about the bed, he called upon the clerk to read the notes.

"'And now, Mr. Lemarchand,' he said to me, when the last note had been criticized to the last word—'now, will you be good enough to describe the attack?'

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"I did so.

"'Ah!' he said. 'Very interesting—*very* interesting indeed. And does he ever complain of pain shooting up into his neck and down the left arm?'

"'No, sir.'

"'That is curious—very curious.' And old Meredith began to question his class upon the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of *angina pectoris*, and how a false *angina* may be separated from a true.

"I still had faith in the patient, and I believed his attacks to be absolutely genuine, in spite of the Sister and the night nurse, whose dislike of the man grew greater each day.

"Two nights later, while at the dinner-table, I was summoned hurriedly to the ward. I found Number Twenty-seven again in the apparent agony of an attack, but with this additional symptom: between his groans and cries of pain (his lips were curved and twisting, his body rocked, writhing to and fro) he held his left arm with his right hand and muttered, through tight-clenched teeth, 'Oh, my arm—my arm!' And then, a moment later, 'Oh, my neck—the pain in my neck!'

"The Sister gave me an expressive look.

"I examined him carefully and closely before I did anything, and I satisfied myself beyond doubt that the man was in extremity of pain. The drawn and twisted face, the great beads of sweat upon the forehead were proof enough.

"And yet this was not true *angina*. I was sure of it—sure! Could the man produce this fearful pain at will? I wondered—wondered if he could, and why.

"Well, I sat and watched, gave him only a mild and harmless draught, although he raved and cried aloud for chloroform. I watched him in his apparent anguish—cruelly, if you like, but resolved to learn how long the attack would last if left to take its course.

"Presently he lay quiet, moaning slightly, hands gripping the coverlet, eyes tight-closed, teeth clenched. Then he looked at me and cursed me horribly, he who till then had passed—with the *padre*—for a religious and God-fearing man.

"At the end of two hours the pain left him, and not till then did I give him a sleeping draught to keep him quiet through the night. I had no desire to stay with him longer, nor did I wish the night nurse to be troubled by him, should he renew his oaths and blasphemies.

"In the morning I telephoned to my chief and told him of this last attack in detail.

"'The man must go,' he said."

Lemarchand paused, looked curiously at Ferrars, who was knitting puzzled brows.

"I hold you?" he asked. "You think it's worth while my going on?"

"Oh, yes!" Ferrars spoke quickly, eagerly. "It's worth your while going on, all right. You hold me, because medical details are always interesting to a layman, and—well, to be quite honest with you, I haven't yet tumbled to the end. But of course either the chap was a humbug or you people thought he was; it must be one of those two things."

"Must it?" Lemarchand laughed a little. "Well, since you permit me, I'll proceed."

He went on with his story, keeping his eyes on Ferrars's face.

"At two o'clock in the afternoon on which I had 'phoned to old Meredith I went down the broad stone staircase to the central hall where students and post-graduates collect after lunch to meet the physicians or surgeons, and to accompany them round the wards and learn from their bedside teaching.

"I found old Meredith there already. He was chatting with a tall, soldierly, frock-coated man with iron-grey moustache and hair. I waited close by. Presently old Meredith looked round and gave me one of his kindly smiles. Then he turned to the man at his side.

"'This is my house physician, Mr. Lemarchand, Dr. Spottiswoode,' he said. And I knew the name at once—a name well known to all who take an interest in criminology—the name of the surgeon-in-chief at Scotland Yard.

"'Will you join my class?' said old Meredith to the great man, with one of his beaming smiles. 'I don't know, though, that there's much in your line of country. There's a girl in a state of coma—over four months now—following on the shock of finding her lover hanging from a bough outside her bedroom window. She may interest you.'

"We walked—the three of us—up the central staircase, talking, some twenty students in our wake. Old Meredith always had a good following. His bedside talks were invariably good.

"'We'll go to Stanley first,' he said. And he led us down the corridor to the ward.

"As we entered I saw Number Twenty-seven sitting on the chair beside his bed, his arms folded across his broad chest.

"We stopped at bed Number One. Old Meredith bent over the patient and spoke

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"HE STARED HARD AT NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN, WHOSE PROFILE WAS IN FULL VIEW."

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kindly to him asking him how he was. The case, however, was nothing special, and—he was a man with a personality, and one couldn't help watching him—Dr. Spottiswoode let his glance travel up and down the ward. His eyes rested at last upon Number Twenty-seven as he sat, brooding, directly facing us.

"I saw the police surgeon start slightly, pull out his *pince-nez*, adjust them, and gaze searchingly across the ward. Then he strolled off casually, and stood lounging by a window a short way down upon the opposite side. But he did not look out upon the quadrangle. He stared hard and long at Number Twenty-seven, whose profile was in full view.

"Presently he strolled back again and stood waiting till old Meredith had finished and was moving on to the next bed.

"'I should like a word with you in private,' I heard him say.

"Then he and old Meredith moved off together to the central table, talking in undertones. I saw them both turn and look at Number Twenty-seven more than once.

"Old Meredith beckoned to me. I joined them.

"'Dr. Spottiswoode has just given me serious information,' he said. 'He is almost certain that he recognizes in Number Twenty-seven Dempster, who is wanted by the police for the murder of his wife in February. You remember the case?'

"I did. It had been a brutal and much-talked-of crime, and the murderer had eluded all efforts to trace his whereabouts.

"'We must, of course, act with caution, and not allow the man to think he is suspected. The best thing will be to dismiss him in the usual way, and then the police can have him arrested as he leaves to-morrow morning. We do not want a scene here.'

"'Right,' said the police surgeon. 'I will see MacAlister and get him to put things in train.'

"So it was done. The order of dismissal was signed that evening by the resident, and Number Twenty-seven, clamouring to be allowed to stay, received his *congé*.

"At the door of the hospital, as he walked out, he was arrested on a warrant for the murder of his wife on February 19th of that year. It took four men ten minutes to get him into a cab.

"As you may imagine, I watched the case with interest. His identity was clearly proved; the evidence against him was overwhelming; he was found guilty, and sentenced to the extreme penalty of the law."

Once more Lemarchand stopped. This time Ferrars rose and stood, an arm on the mantelpiece, with his back to the fire.

"And he was hanged! That's the end of your story. It's good, but not good enough. It wants building treatment before it can be sold. The idea, too—the idea of a criminal shamming illness and hiding in a hospital is so old that I guessed it from the first. It's just a 'promising nucleus'—perhaps as empty and deceptive as this practice you're so well rid of here. But at present it ends tamely—with the fellow being hanged."

Lemarchand—he was still sitting on the chair-arm—flicked floorwards a small piece of torn paper which had fallen on his thigh. Then he rose, came to the fireplace, stood and faced his friend.

"He was not hanged," he said.

"What?"

"No. You see, he escaped."

"Escaped — after conviction — sentence? How, my dear fellow—how?"

"Like this. While he was in prison, awaiting execution, he had frequent attacks of—which—er—resembled *angina*. This was told me afterwards by the prison doctor himself. On the strength of these attacks, and at the instance of his solicitor, a reprieve was asked for. It was, however, refused."

"But you said they didn t hang him!"

"No. On the morning of the day before that on which execution was fixed to take place the warders outside his cell were alarmed by his shrieks and cries. They found him lying face downwards on the floor. The doctor, hastily summoned, arrived too late. The man was dead."

"Dead? But—but, Lemarchand——"

"Yes, Ferrars, he was dead. Are you"—Lemarchand spoke slowly—"are you satisfied with the story *now?*"

"Satisfied?" Ferrars took a step forward, then took a step back. "Satisfied with it? No! It's—it's an astounding ending, but it leaves things indeterminate; it explains nothing—it only half suggests. Editors—and, after all, they're the best judges of the public's necessities—don't like to have the end unfinished; a story must explain itself—must be properly rounded off."

"It does explain itself."

"But it doesn't."

"Yes it does, Ferrars. The key to it all lies here."

Lemarchand walked over to the bureau and took out the small sheet of paper which he had detached from the others when he had first taken the *dossier* from its drawer. And

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he came back to the fireplace and stood by Ferrars's side.

"Here is the real explanation," he said, quietly. "Number Twenty-seven's confession — a copy of it, rather—(which he had been writing at the very moment of his seizure) — which they found crushed and bundled in his hand."

'A confession?'

"Yes. Read it—read it; then admit that you did not guess the end." And Lemarchand tossed the paper across.

Ferrars caught it, had it open, read it aloud.

"'It is nearly two and a half years since I discovered that by nervous will-pressure on the two carotid arteries at either side of the neck I could produce at will attacks of pain in the region of the heart. The severity of those attacks depends upon the amount of pressure and upon the length of time that such pressure is kept up. I made use of this knowledge (accidentally discovered) to hide from justice—and, but for an accident, I should still be free.

"'To-day it is my intention to make an effort, by continuous pressure, to compass my death. If I succeed, this paper will interest the world of medicine and of science.

"'I *shall* succeed. I go to join my wife. I loved her.

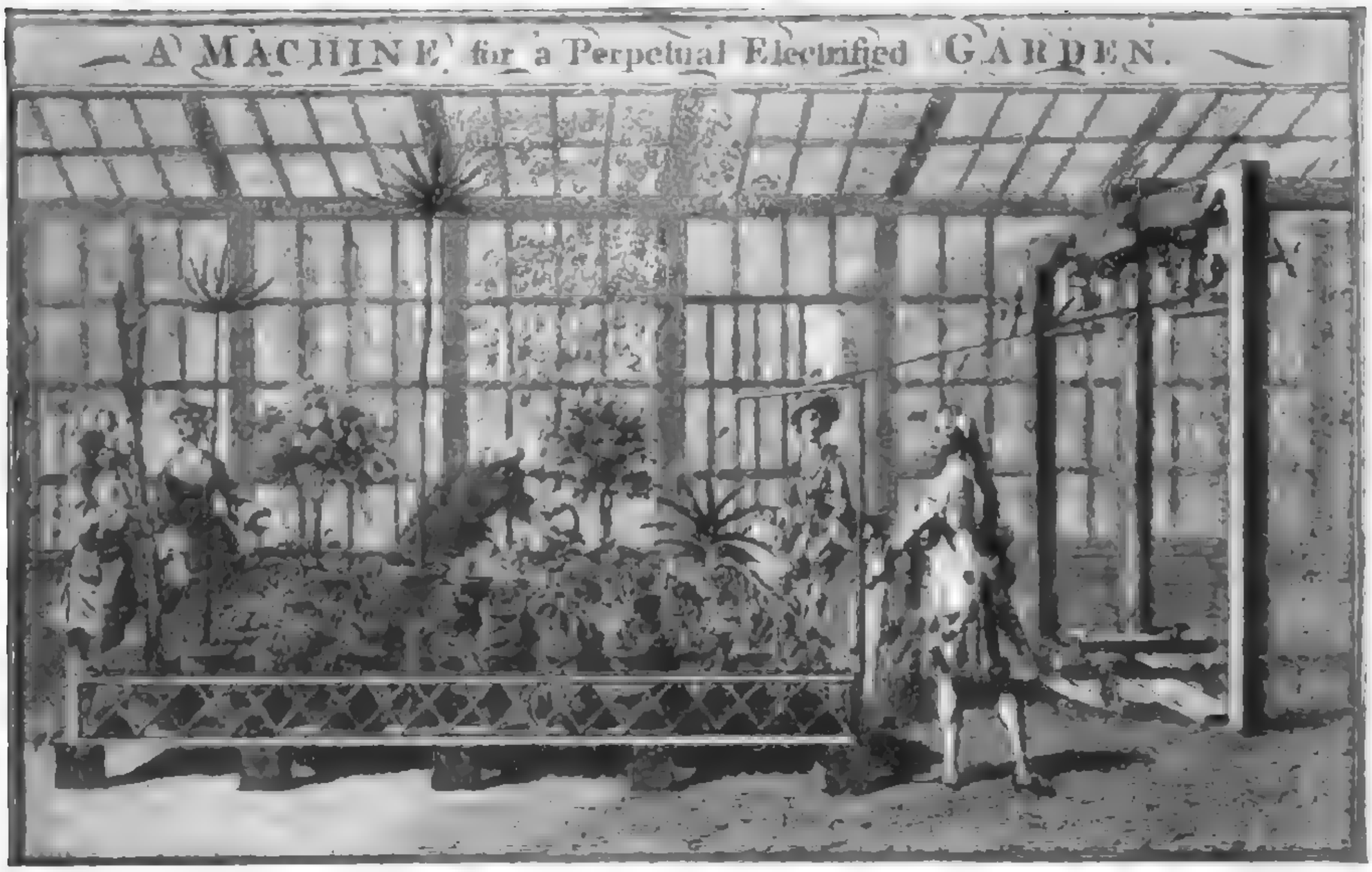
"'Farewell!'"



"THEY FOUND HIM LYING FACE DOWNWARDS ON THE FLOOR."

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TO THOSE WHO IMAGINED THE USE OF ELECTRICITY IN THE CULTIVATION OF PLANTS TO BE A NEW IDEA, THE ABOVE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ILLUSTRATION WILL COME AS A GREAT SURPRISE.

The Antiquity of Modern Inventions.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

[Recent discovery has shown that the palace of the Cæsars was furnished with lifts. The following article provides even more extraordinary instances—such as the taximeter, the penny-in-the-slot machine, looping-the-loop, and even the growing of plants by electricity—of the truth of the saying that there is nothing new under the sun.]

THE saying that "there is no new thing under the sun" may be very hackneyed, but it is very true. We take a natural pride in our wonderful modern inventions, but are apt to overlook the fact that they are, after all, largely the developments and improvements of ideas as old as the hills. This has recently received one more proof, if that were necessary, in the announcement that Professor Boni, while carrying out excavations in Rome, on the site formerly occupied by the palace of the Cæsars on the Palatine Hill, has proved that at least three large lifts were used in the palace, enabling the Roman Emperors to ascend from the Forum to the top of the Palatine. One shaft, which has not yet been completely cleared from the *débris* and rubbish which encumbered it, is no less than a hundred and twenty feet deep. Imagination is the true begetter of all these things. The man who first thought of a flying-machine in ages long past was doubtless scoffed at as a superstitious dreamer, yet here we have to-day men flying around us in all directions. It will probably always be the same. Even so late as 1884 a careful thinker like Richard Proctor had so little faith in the possibility of dirigible balloons that he could write: "The buoyancy of balloons is secured, and can be secured, only by one method, and that method is such as to preclude all possibility—so, at least, it seems to me—that the balloon can be navigated." The fact is that the impossibility of yesterday frequently becomes a probability to-day and a commonplace achievement to-morrow.

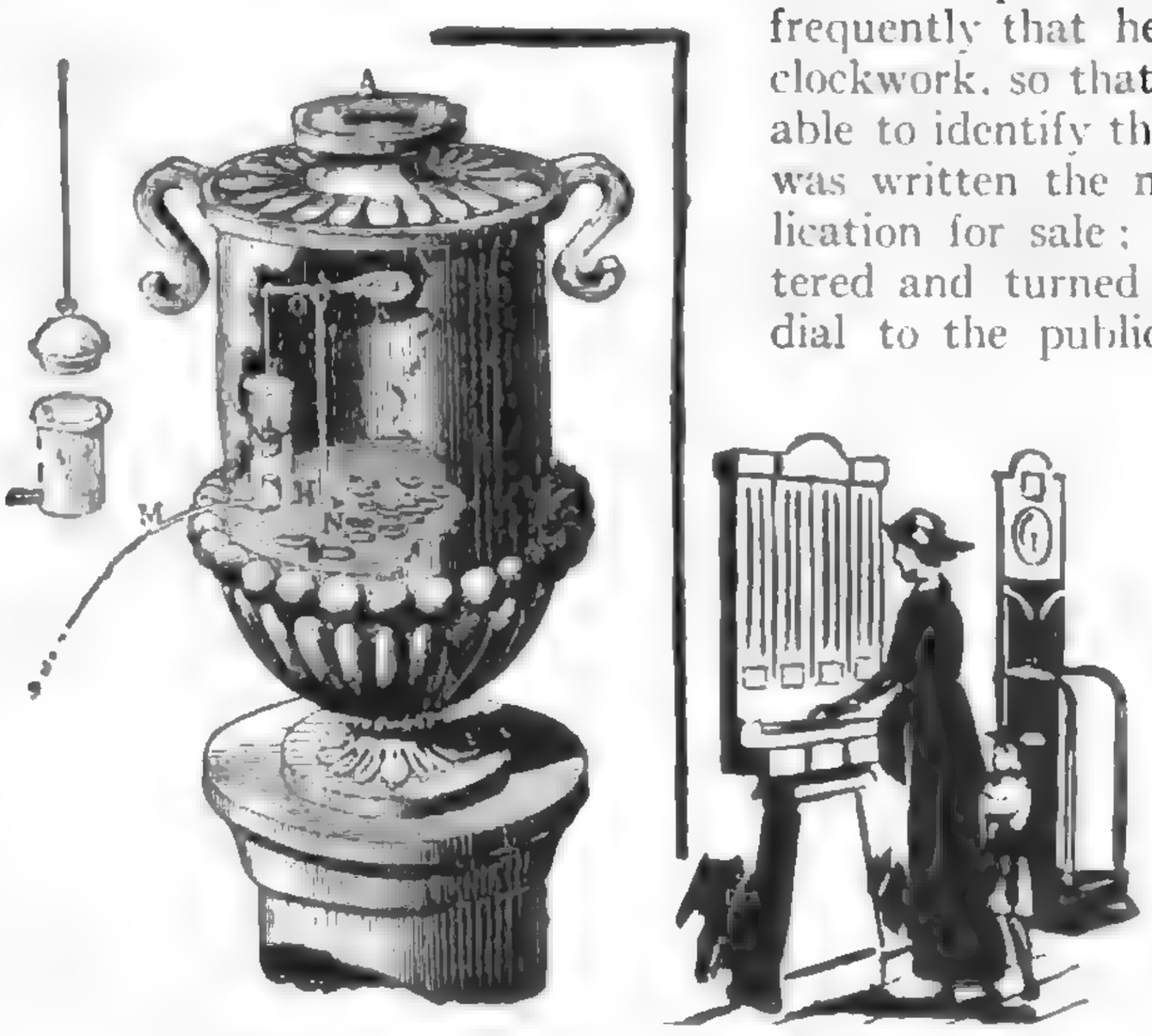
The application of electricity to the cultivation of plants may strike the reader as being the very "last cry" in gardening and floriculture, but a glance at the interesting print that we reproduce from a book published towards the end of the eighteenth century will show that even here we have been anticipated. We have not succeeded in tracing the source of this old print that has come into our possession, but we have discovered the following interesting fact. A letter signed "Stephen Demainbray," and dated Edinburgh, February 10th, 1747, is

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printed in the old *Gentleman's Magazine*, in which the writer says: "As the following discovery may be of future benefit to society, if the hint be rightly taken, I make no doubt of your inserting the sketch of an application of electricity towards the improvement of vegetation, which I have reason to believe the first put in execution, since nothing hath ever been published of the kind. On the 20th December last I had a myrtle from Mr. Boutcher's greenhouse, which since that time I have electrified seventeen times, and allowed the shrub half a pint of water each fourth day, which you will please to observe was kept in the room most frequented of my house, and consequently most exposed to the injuries of the air, by the doors and windows being oftenest opened. This myrtle has since, by electrization, produced several shoots, the longest measuring full three inches; whereas numbers of the same kind and vigour, left in the said greenhouse, have not shown the least degree of increase since that time."

Hero of Alexandria (about 125 B.C.) was an ingenious inventor of mechanical toys. In his works, "Pneumatics" and "Automata," he describes some hundred small machines that he probably never carried beyond the "model" stage. These included a steam-engine which is said to be of the form now known as Avery's patent, and a double forcing pump to be used as a fire-engine. Hero was also the original inventor of the automatic delivery, or penny-in-the-slot, machine. He describes "a sacrificial vessel which flows only when money is introduced." When the coin is dropped through the slit it falls on one end of a balanced horizontal lever, which, being depressed, opens a valve suspended from a chain at the other end, and the water begins to flow. When the lever has been depressed to a certain angle the coin falls off, and the valve being weighted returns to its seat and cuts off the supply. We give an illustration of Hero's holy-water distributer, as used by the Egyptian priests for supplying sacred water at the doors of the temples more than two thousand years ago. The mechanism is practically identical with the present system, and the ancient invention is, if anything, more ingeniously simple than the modern.

In the account of Richard Carlile, the free-thinker (1790–1843) in the "Dictionary of National Biography," the writer says: "His shopmen were arrested so frequently that he sold his books by clockwork, so that the buyer was unable to identify the seller. On a dial was written the name of every publication for sale; the purchaser entered and turned the handle of the dial to the publication he wanted; on depositing the money the book dropped down before him."



Ancient. Modern.

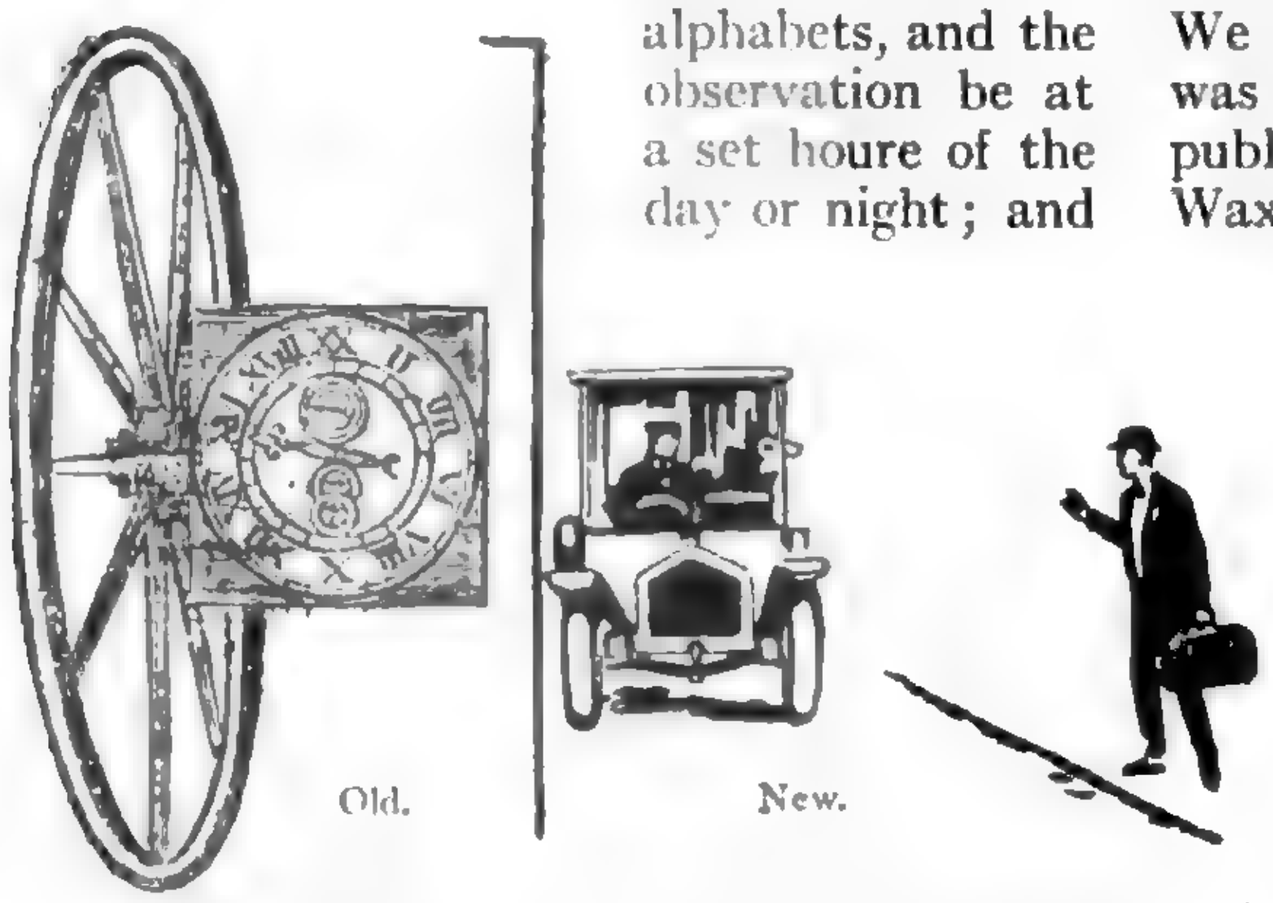
THE MECHANISM OF THIS MACHINE, USED BY THE EGYPTIAN PRIESTS FOR SUPPLYING SACRED WATER AT THE DOORS OF THE TEMPLES, MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, IS PRACTICALLY IDENTICAL WITH THAT OF THE PRESENT-DAY PENNY-IN-THE-SLOT MACHINES.

Also we show a taximeter in use about a hundred years ago. "One of these," it was announced at the time of its invention, "will cost but twenty-five shillings, without a case, varnishing, or silvering; but if varnished and silvered in all respects as a clock-dial, one guinea and a half. The others are from two to four guineas, and eight guineas if with bells to strike the miles and quarters on pulling a string; one of which may be seen at Mr. Neale's, watchmaker, in Leadenhall Street."

The modern telegraph could not possibly have been brought to its present state of perfection until we had made great additions to our knowledge of electricity. Yet imagination foreshadowed it. In a little book that lies before us, "Mathematicall Recreations," by Henry Van Etten (London: 1633), we read: "Some says that by helpe of the Magnes persons which are absent may know each others minde, as if one being here at London, and another at Prage in Germany;

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if each of them had a needle touched with one Magnes, then the vertue is such that in the same time that the needle which is at Prage shall moove, this that is at London shall also; provided that the parties have like secret notes or alphabets, and the observation be at a set houre of the day or night; and



ALTHOUGH THE TAXI-CAB IS A COMPARATIVE NOVELTY, THE TAXIMETER WAS IN USE ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

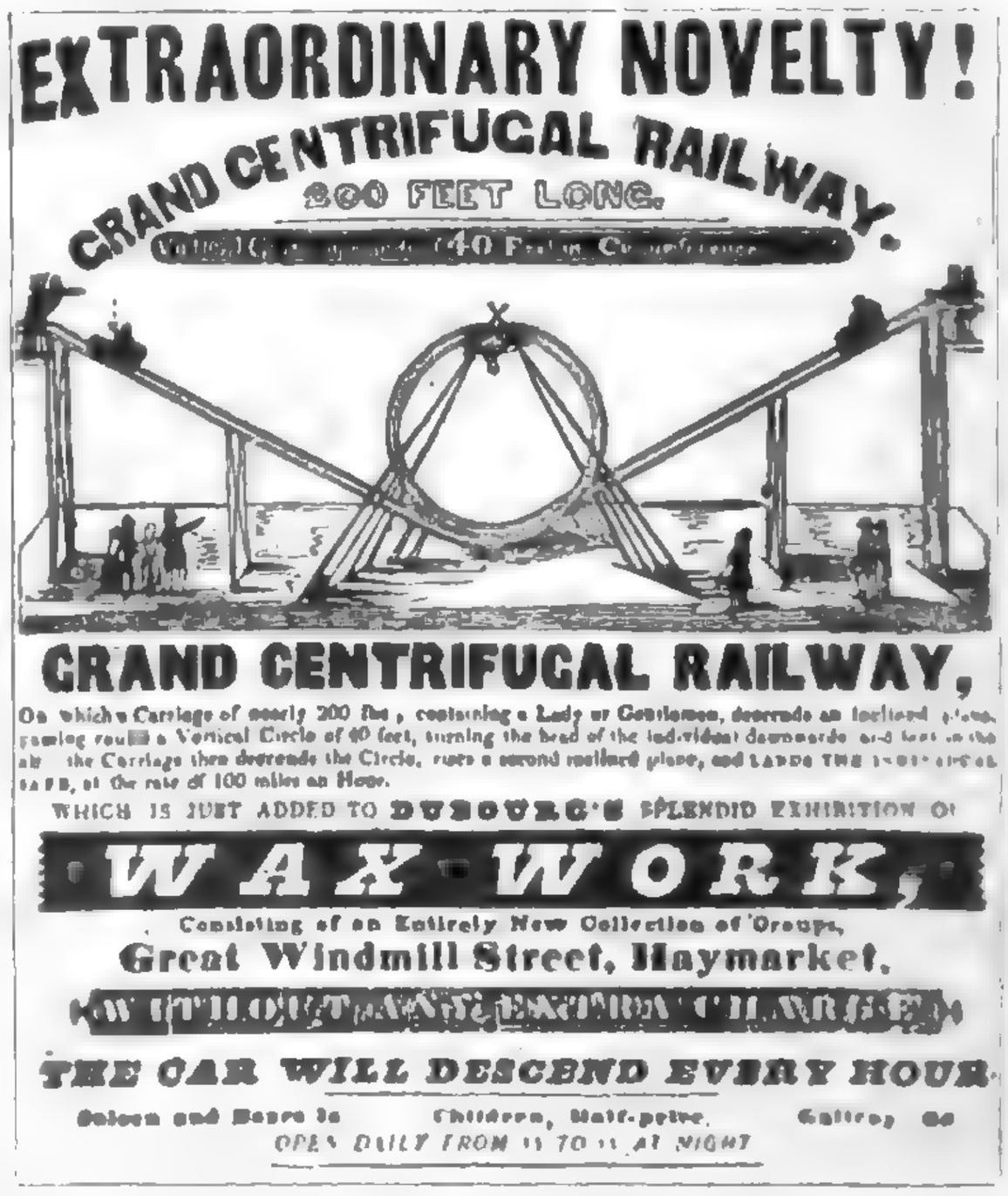
when the one party will declare unto the other, then let that party moove the needle to these letters which will declare the matter to the other, and the mooving of the other parties needle shall open his intention. The invention is subtile, but I doubt whether in the world there can be found so great a stone, or such a Magnes which carries with it such vertue; neither is it expedient, for treasons would be then too frequent and open." Here we have foreshadowed not merely telegraphy but wireless telegraphy!

John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester, who died in 1672, wrote some extraordinarily prophetic pseudo-scientific works, such as "The Discovery of a New World," "A Discourse Concerning a New Planet," "Mercury; or the Secret and Swift Messenger," and "Mathematical Magic; or the Wonders That May be Performed by Mathematical Geometry." In his "Mercury" Wilkins says the idea just quoted from Van Etten is due to the old author, Famianus Strada, and adds: "This Invention is altogether imaginary, having no Foundation in any real experiment." But he gives a code in anticipation of the Morse code now in general use, which is really the biliteral cipher invented by Bacon. It is practically the same as the dot and dash system of Morse, only every letter is represented by five symbols in different order. Thus five dots for A, four dots and one dash for B, three dots, a dash, and a dot for C, and so on. He shows that this code can be used with "two Bells of different Notes, or some such audible and loud Sounds, which we may command at Pleasure, as Muskets, Cannons, Horns, Drums, etc."

The reader may suppose that at least the switchback and the looping-the-loop are modern inventions. But they are not so. We reproduce a print of a switchback that was constructed in 1813, and a facsimile of a public advertisement of a loop at Dubourg's Waxwork Exhibition in the Haymarket a little later. The first loop seems to have been set up in 1833 in the Paris Hippodrome by the inventor, a French engineer named Clavières. It disappeared for a period, until 1865, when it turned up again in Paris as a modern invention.

At any rate, the reader may be apt to think, the submarine is a quite modern notion; but this is not so. Mersenne, in his work on "Hydraulics, Pneumatics, and the Art of Navigation," published in Paris in 1644, deals with the subject, and Wilkins devoted a whole chapter to discussing its uses and its difficulties in detail.

Emmanuel Swedenborg, the founder of the Swedenborgian sect, wrote, between 1710 and 1714, an essay on "The plan of a certain ship which, with its man, is able to go under the sea whither it pleases, and inflict much damage on the enemies' fleet." But we may



AN ADVERTISEMENT, DATING FROM THE EARLY PART OF THE LAST CENTURY, SHOWING THAT LOOPING-THE-LOOP IS NO NEW SENSATION TO LONDONERS.

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THIS VIEW OF A SWITCHBACK RAILWAY IN RUSSIA OVER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO PROVES THE IDEA TO BE ANYTHING BUT A MODERN ONE.

go back another century, for a submarine boat was actually exhibited on the Thames in 1625 with King James I. on board. Fulton also elaborated complete plans of a submarine at the beginning of the last century.

As for dirigible balloons, M. G. Tissandier, in 1883, appears to have been the first to apply an electric motor to balloons, although, as we have already remarked, Proctor thought in the following year that the navigation of these things was quite impossible. But there exist illustrations of two earlier conceptions of dirigible balloons. The first is the one proposed by Green in 1840 for a voyage across the Atlantic; the second, which ascended from Vauxhall Gardens in 1843, is remarkable for its resemblance to the modern dirigible airship, having a rudder and propeller complete.

But let us pass to the heavier-than-air flying-machine, as being perhaps one of the most "modern" of all inventions. In the very earliest times men have conceived the idea of flying with wings like birds. There is no reason whatever to doubt the fact that Archytas of Tarentum (about three hundred and ninety-four years before the Christian era) constructed an automaton pigeon that would fly. Cardan, the mathematician (1501-1576), says: "There is no reason why such a machine should not be put in motion, especially by a favourable breeze. The lightness of the body would contribute to this result, as would the largeness of the wings and the strength of the wheels; and probably the dove could take its flight in a certain fashion, but with a wavering motion, like the flickering of a lamp. Thus it would sometimes mount upwards spontaneously, flutter its wings, then leave off suddenly and fall, its motive power being unequal to its weight." Regiomontanus also made an eagle that would fly.

But a flying-machine invented by a Vienna watchmaker named Degan, in 1809, has so many points in common with the aeroplane of to-day that we will give a description of it. A frame was made, principally consisting of rods of some strong but light materials, on which the man stood erect. A flat-shaped wing, nine feet long, eight feet broad at the swell, and terminating at a point, proceeded from that part of the frame close to each shoulder, and a fan-shaped tail, apparently connected with both wings, proceeded from behind as far as their swell. Each wing was concave, like a parachute, and, by a series of cords from the different ribs composing it, could be suddenly contracted so as to give percussion against the air, and consequently by its resistance produce elevation.

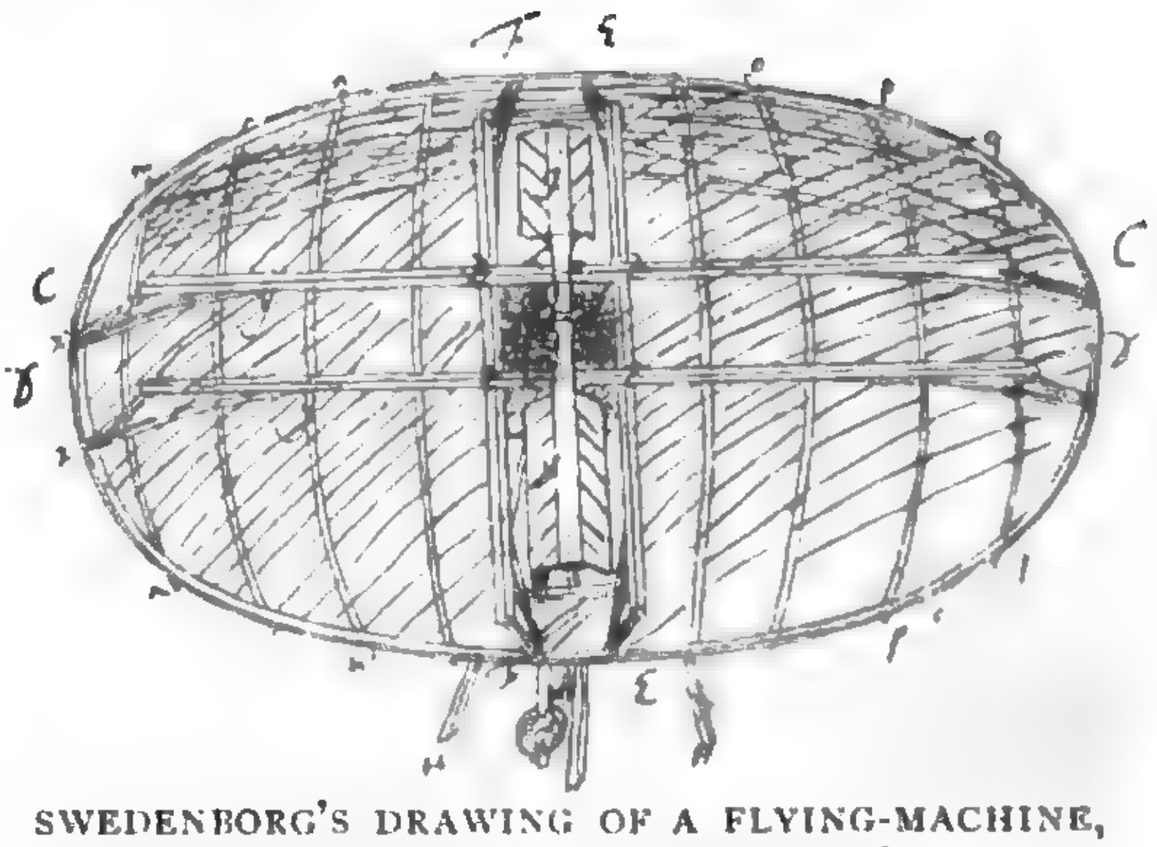
It is not sufficiently explained how the working was effected, but it seems that this was done by elevating, depressing, or revolving

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a crank connected at each extremity with the series of cords which displayed or contracted the wings. Degan is said not only to have mounted high in the air with his machine, but to have exhibited a flight resembling that of a bird, "not consisting merely in ascent or descent, but in real aerial navigation."

Swedenborg, to whose submarine destroyer I have already referred, wrote a description of a flying-machine, with a pen drawing of the same, about the year 1716. It consisted of a light frame covered with strong canvas, and was provided with two long oars or wings moving on a horizontal axis, and so arranged that the up stroke met with little resistance, while the down-stroke provided the lifting power. He was confident that the problem of motive power would be solved. "There are sufficient proofs and examples from Nature," he said, "that such flights can take place without danger, although when the first trials are made you may have to pay for the experience and not mind an arm or a leg." We give a facsimile of Swedenborg's own drawing.

Roller-skating came up as a new invention about forty years ago. It was, however, merely a revival. Most people will learn with great surprise from the accompanying old print, which was issued about the year 1829, that it was in vogue at least fifty years before the date at which it was looked upon as something quite new.



SWEDENBORG'S DRAWING OF A FLYING-MACHINE, MADE ABOUT THE YEAR 1716.

It is noteworthy, too, that even in our games we only improve the pastimes of the ancients. We invent very little. Games with a ball, such as cricket, football, golf, ninepins, and ping-pong, were played, with slightly different rules, by our ancestors in the dim past, while chess, draughts, cards, backgammon, and dominoes are, in their elements, of tremendous antiquity. Truly there is nothing new under the sun.

Finally, readers of Mr. Richard Marsh's "Judith Lee: the Experiences of a Lip-Reader," recently contributed to this magazine, will be interested to know that Bishop Wilkins, in a book published in 1641, states, "It is related of an ancient doctor, Gabriel Neale, that he could understand any word by the mere motion of the lips, without any utterance."



EVEN ROLLER-SKATING WAS INDULGED IN BY OUR FOREFATHERS, AS WILL BE SEEN BY THE ABOVE PRINT PUBLISHED ABOUT 1829.

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The Folly of Feodora.

By MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS.

Illustrated by F. Wiles.

"IT'S altogether ripping, having you home, old Fee!"

"It's altogether ripping to be at home again, young Ber, even with your boots in my lap!" laughed Feodora, gladly.

She sat by the great schoolroom fire toasting crumpets, with a big apron over her dress and a girlish flush upon her still smooth cheeks.

She was going to be thirty-four next birthday, so she was old enough to savour a certain topsy-turvy relish about crumpets and schoolroom tea. She was the eldest of the Leslies, and Bernard, the youngest, was but fifteen.

"It's like old times," suddenly observed Dr. Prideaux, who, having come round to remind the vicar of a board meeting, had been inveigled in to tea, with the presence of Feodora as a bait. "Like old times," was what he said; in his heart he was thinking how detestably unlike it all was—with that familiar, terrible unlikeness which we see on the faces of the dead.

"Ah, such far-away old times!" sighed Fee, half smiling, but half melancholy too.

It was thirteen years since she had steeled her heart, set her face like a flint, and gone out into the world to qualify as a nurse. The Vicarage was overfull of nestlings. Some of them must needs take wing. She had gone nursing, Elsie had married, Mildred was a High School mistress, Hugh in orders, James and Walter in the Colonies. There remained at home now only two lively girls, Honor and Constance. Just at present, Bernard also, since it was Easter and holiday-time.

Fourteen or fifteen years ago Feodora Leslie had been a really pretty girl, had there been anyone to remark the fact. She had, however, as it were, had no time to be pretty. That she was so, hardly occurred to her overworked mother, whose health had given way under pressure of the never-ending duties of maternity, and who would have been unable to carry on the fight at all without "old Fee." To her brothers and sisters she was just the eldest—a person who was always patient and kind, who never wanted to go to parties or have outings; she was always "too busy." She was as much outside the social scheme of things as if she had been the nursery governess.

Gervase Prideaux, in those days, was the only person to whom the idea of her beauty presented itself. He was quite young then, not firmly established in his practice; and Feodora, besides being so much occupied, was extremely shy and difficult of approach. She had taken her resolution, left home, gone off to do her training, and he had presently found himself married to the daughter of Major Jones, who lived almost at his gates, and whose wife was not a lady to allow her daughter to miss chances.

Feodora, after completing her three years' training, went to be a ward sister in a hospital in Cape Town. Now, after ten years' hard and successful work there, she was home for a real long holiday.

Gervase Prideaux had been a widower these three or four years. His wife was killed in a motor accident in the earlier days of motors. Feodora considered him sadly altered; or perhaps it was her own point of view which had changed since the days in which she had thought him so handsome.

He on his side found her more changed in manner than in person. She was no longer a somewhat awkward girl, who blushed for nothing, and looked glum when she was feeling deeply. She was a sunny, gracious, self-possessed creature, accustomed to give orders, ready to converse, full of knowledge of the world, and of a merry humour which, in the old days, she had not shown him at all.

He sat moodily by the great fire, eating crumpets and marmalade with an underlying dread of gout, and thinking to himself what a mistake it is to believe in the permanence of first love.

Here was he, a disappointed, disillusioned man, who had tried marriage, found it a failure, and been horrified at his own sensations when his wife had been taken from him—a horror which still, at times, held him by

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the throat. He sat beside the woman who as a girl had haunted his pillow and coloured his day dreams; and it was all prosaic, drab, dull. The trailing clouds of glory had dispersed. The light of common day glared on the bald patch in his brown locks. She was a self-sufficing, energetic woman, with her own career, her own interests. He, a slightly embittered, essentially middle-aged person, to whom life had ceased to present a lure.

His profession now was the only object which had power to kindle him. He was deep in research work, upon the function of animals and insects in spreading infection. As they sat chatting, Fee frivolling—with a levity which half surprised him—among the youngsters, he was reflecting that she could, if she would, do him a great favour. He knew that Dr. Clintock, the great authority upon the tsetse fly and its evil works, was one of the consulting physicians in the hospital wherein she was known as Sister Mary Crossdale. This important personage was now in London. Dare he, Gervase Prideaux, ask Feodora for an introduction? He was inclined to think he dare not. She was too changed, too utterly a stranger.

She stood in the full rays of the afternoon sun, bringing him his second cup of tea.

"March is indeed going out like a lamb," said she. "The air is as soft as June."

"We shall pay for it later," he replied. "Let me see, this is March 30th. Here is an article from to-day's paper about a warm April meaning a cold summer."

He took a cutting from his pocket-book and showed it to her, noting with a fresh pang that she had to adjust her pince-nez in order to read the print. That did indeed mark the flight of time. He sighed quite deeply.

Bernard, only just home from school and in riotous spirits, was threatening to make April-fools of all his sisters on the first of the month, and receiving from the two younger ones a direct challenge of his ability to do so. No sensible conversation was possible. How could you talk about science amid such babble?

Gervase recalled a wild March morning, fifteen years ago, when there had been troops of volunteers manœuvring on the downs, and "old Fee" had for once obtained permission to ride the staid Vicarage cob. He had met her, with the sting of the spring air in her cheeks, the tossing of the wind blowing out her golden hair like a banner; and they had ridden together, for a long way, all the morning! And it had seemed but a moment.

Now he was considering the question of malarial infection, and she put on glasses to read the paper!

He took his departure a little abruptly, without having brought the talk within measurable distance of a request for the introduction which he so coveted.

"Dear me," said "old Fee," pensively, when he had gone, "*how* Dr. Prideaux has changed!"

"Not a bit. He was always the same dry old stick," cheerfully returned Bernard, sitting down to finish the last crumpet.

"You see, Lottie—his wife—was so disagreeable," remarked Constance, curled up on the fender stool. "Always so peevish and fretful, wanting to know where he went and what he did, and asking for things he couldn't give her. Not keeping a motor was her great grievance. It really seemed a judgment that she should have been killed in a motor smash."

"He did such an awfully silly thing," observed Honor. "Told her at the start that she wasn't his first love. She never let that drop. Always wanting to know who his first love was."

"Honor! Who could have told you such a thing as that?" cried Feodora, indignantly.

"Told me? Why, she did. She never talked about anything else," returned her sister, coolly.

"Hark at old Fee!" teased Bernard, jumping up and throwing his arms about his sister's soft, plump waist. "Go it, old girl! Let 'em have it! They want taking down a peg."

He whirled her round until she begged for mercy, then let her go suddenly. His elbow caught the thin gold chain which held her eye-glasses. Unnoticed, they fell to the ground, and Bernard, stepping back, planted a heavy masculine sole full upon them as they lay. The grinding, crackling sound of shivering glass brought the game to an abrupt conclusion.

"Oh, Ber! Oh, you young *limb*, as old Susan used to say! Little do you know what you have done. My only other pair I left in London to be mended. I am blind now until I can get new ones!"

Bernard stared, aghast. "Oh, rot, old girl! I'll cycle over into Ditchford——"

"No use, boy! I left the oculist's formula in town with the glasses. Besides, it is Easter Eve and nearly six o'clock; all the shops in Ditchford are closed till Tuesday."

"Oh, Fee, I am a clown! I could jolly well kick myself!"

"All right, old man, it isn't half as bad as

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"HE WHIRLED HER ROUND UNTIL SHE BEGGED FOR MERCY."

it sounds. It only means that I can't read or sew for a day or two. Anything else I can do almost as well as ever; and, luckily, one knows all the Easter hymns and things by heart."

It so chanced that when Dr. Prideaux reached home that night he found awaiting him sundry copies, recently printed, of a pamphlet written by himself and read before a medical society. He was particularly anxious that Dr. Clintock should see this pamphlet, which embodied the most recent results of his research. He therefore made up his mind, at all hazards, to beg Miss Leslie to help him to an introduction if she could.

A distant patient was taken suddenly worse upon the afternoon of Easter Day.

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The doctor was sent for, and did not reach home until past midnight, too tired to think of anything at all. On Monday morning, however—being the first of April and Bank Holiday—he found himself at leisure, his patient having passed beyond reach of his ministrations, and accordingly he wrote a note and sent it round to the Vicarage.

It was an exquisite morning. Fee had been down the garden to see if there were violets under the old red wall, as in past days. She had gathered a bunch, and their perfume awoke in her various little, foolish, tender memories of her girlish life.

She was not, as a rule, a sentimentalist, but something about this home-coming of hers had touched her curiously. She was still a young woman, in full health and vigour. She could not help feeling that she still had a future. Here at home, however, she stood, separated from her youth by a great gap of years, treated by the younger ones as a person of a bygone generation. Everything at the Vicarage seemed to be unchanged—everything except herself and Gervase Prideaux. She had this morning just a glimpse of the real meaning of words which hitherto she would have classified as hysterical and overstrained:—

"Oh, death in life, the days that are no more!"

She saw Bernard, gracefully attired in an ancient Norfolk jacket, grey flannel trousers, and tennis shoes, coming down the garden-path with an envelope in his hand.

"Letter for you, old Fee!" he cried, cheerily.

Feodora took the letter. She could see it bore no stamp.

"It's only a note," she observed.

"Who from?" was the terse, if ungrammatical, demand.

"I can't say, Ber. Somebody who writes very small. Have you forgotten that you blinded me on Saturday? I've been groping for violets and only just managing to find them. Open it and read it to me, there's a dear boy."

"It's from Dr. Prideaux."

"Then it's probably an invitation to tea," said Fee, unconcernedly.

Even at this point—so he subsequently declared—temptation had not assailed Bernard. He was in a beatific mood, for he had just April-fooled Honor quite gloriously. He persuaded cook—who adored him—to allow him to open the eggs she required for her custards by drilling a small hole in one side of them. He then re-filled the shells with sand, adhesive paper off stamps sealed the holes, and they were all artistically distributed, holes downwards, among the hens' laying-places.

Honor, collecting her treasures, picked up each gingerly, deposited it in her lifted apron, and carried these apples of Sodom triumphantly to the store-room. Bernard and cook had hardly done laughing yet.

It had not, however, entered the bad boy's head to April-fool his eldest sister—chiefly, perhaps, because "old Fee" was such easy game. He began to read the doctor's note aloud in all good faith; it was the tenor of the first sentences which sent the devil to his active brain.

DEAR MISS LESLIE,—Our meeting on Saturday was a mixed pleasure and pain. It is so long since we saw each other that it was almost like meetng a stranger. My reason for troubling you with this note is that I felt too shy then to beg the favour which I desire from you. If it is one which you do not see your way to grant, I beg you to say so at once.

Bernard turned over the page, and as he did so Feodora made a quick movement as if to stop him. It was but momentary, and she checked it instantly. She could not be so mad as to suppose that Gervase Prideaux had private matters to discuss with her.

But the mischief was done. The wording of the letter had set alight the mischief in Ber's heart; his sister's involuntary action goaded him even more. He read on, in a grave voice, without a pause of any kind:—

Could you think of me as more than an old frlend? For it is thus that I think of you. If so, send me but a line, a word, and tell me I may hope to win.

With a swift dart, Feodora snatched the paper from his hands.

Bernard, fully expecting a cuff on his head, stood gazing at her face in a kind of fear. It was not Feodora as he knew her who stood there, but one wearing the look of a woman who, having believed in the death of her child, hears for the first time that he lives. A thrill seemed to have run through her whole being; she was aflame, transfigured with a joy she could not name.

No idea that there had been anything between the doctor and "old Fee" had ever entered the boy's head. He had expected a snort of incredulity, a box on the ear, and perhaps to be tumbled over into the laurels as a punishment for inventing such "tosh."

When he saw that his sister actually believed the staid, sombre Prideaux to have penned these lines he was stricken with remorse and horror. What had he done?

"Go—run—go away, dear boy," Fee was

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saying, as though unconscious of her own words.

At this crucial moment Bernard heard his father's voice from the house, loudly calling to him. That summons meant stormy waters ahead. To make the vicar an April-fool was a venture fraught with peril, but Bernard had never been one to shrink from the consequences of his pranks. He was ready to go to his father, own up, and take punishment like a man; but he quailed as he perceived dimly, but unmistakably, what he had done to poor old Fee.

There flew to his mind the idea that, if he could escape now, if he could run to his father and leave Fee alone, she must realize, the moment she reflected, that he had been hoaxing her. If not, he might coax Honor or Con to tell her. At any rate, while she stood there, with that look on her face, it was simply beyond the boy's power to cry out "April-fool!"

He turned, and ran for his life, leaving her there with her letter.

In the shock of the moment Feodora was quite unable to think. She could only feel. No such reflection as, "Would he be likely to address me in this way thus abruptly?" crossed her mind. He *had* so addressed her. There was the fact. She dealt with the situation as it was.

Though he had never said, "I love you," in the old times, she had believed him to be her lover. She could recall now, at this moment, the numbing pain she had endured, the blank dreadfulness of that day, in the second year of her training, when she received from home the news of his engagement to Lottie Jones. When her sisters, yesterday, told her of his having owned to his wife that she was not his first love, Feodora had felt sure she knew who that first love had been.

Therefore his letter could cause surprise only to the present-day, common-sense, active-minded Sister Mary Crossdale. To the



"IN THE SHOCK OF THE MOMENT FEODORA WAS QUITE UNABLE TO THINK."

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primitive Feodora Leslie it needed little explanation.

Slowly, without consciously directing her own movements, she went down the garden, opened a gate in the outer wall, and found herself upon the moor.

Not far from the Vicarage grounds there was a ridge, surmounted by a Danish barrow. It was there, sitting on that barrow, with her brothers and sisters playing around, that she had told Gervase of her decision to go and be a nurse, and had asked his advice as to the best hospital in which to train.

He had not seized his moment. He had not said, "Let us dare poverty and join our lives." Nothing had happened; she had gone away and shouldered life's burden, bravely solitary.

As she reached the mound, with its outgrowing hawthorn bush just budding into leaf, she was thinking, with Aurora Leigh, that 'twas morning then, and now 'twas night.

It did not surprise her at all to see Gervase Prideaux approaching. To have known the reason of his approach—the quest that brought him thither—would have surprised her far more could it have been revealed to her.

It is probable that when, years ago, he first took to haunting that spot there may have been a sentimental cause which drew him there. It resulted, however, in a scientific discovery. There was a dew-pond beyond the barrow, on the same ridge, which formed a breeding-place for a kind of gnat very closely allied to the malarial mosquito. Specimens for experiment could usually be collected there. It was early this season to hunt for eggs, but the phenomenal mildness of the weather had tempted him to the search.

He walked along, his mind concentrated upon the desire to know what Clintock would think of his pamphlet: and there in the sunshine stood Feodora, as if awaiting him, looking at him in a fashion that made him wonder whether he was awake or dreaming.

She had walked out just as she was, without a hat, in a blue dress whose simple folds admirably expressed her almost statuesque figure. Her rippling hair was as golden as ever; it gleamed in the warm light. As for her expression, one could but admit that it was an invitation. Eyes, lips, attitude, all said, as though she had spoken, "Come!"

What could it mean? The doctor looked at her almost horrified. His approach resembled nothing so little as an eager lover's. But if her aspect was bewildering, her first words completed his mystification.

"Oh," she cried, in a voice with a new thrill sounding in it—"oh, Gervase, you have come too soon—I am not ready yet!"

Too stupefied to be able to ask himself the meaning of these extraordinary words, he could only echo them.

"Not ready?" he repeated, mechanically.

She held her hand to him with such an absolute certainty of his taking it that he found it in his grasp, as it were, automatically. He could feel its trembling softness, as if a current of warm joy flowed from her to him. Something awoke in him, quite suddenly—a rage of bitterness, an access of vain regret. For the first time he envisaged what he had lost, all this long, empty while. Words beat upon his brain insistently—"The years that the locust hath eaten!"

"Feodora," he stammered, "surely you can't mean——"

"I had your letter," she answered, very low, drawing away her hand, and a part of that new mysterious joy along with it. "I—I can't, you know—you can understand! Such a request *can't* be answered all in a moment!"

When she touched upon the letter, which was a common-sense, tangible thing, in the regions of a life he understood, and to which he was accustomed, he began to get a grip on things once more, and her words stung him to anger.

"I'm sorry it seemed such a great thing to ask," he remarked, with irony. "I'm afraid I have presumed unduly upon our old friendship and been too bold."

"Oh, it's not that—it's not that," she faltered, perilously near a breakdown. "It is just that I—never dreamed of your asking me anything at all. I came to the conclusion—years ago now—that it had all been my fancy, that you had never wished——"

Her own emotion vexed her. She must not allow it to become ungovernable, more especially in face of his unmoved gravity. Slipping out a little handkerchief, she freed her big blue eyes from their momentary dimness.

"Sit down a moment; give me time," she continued, smiling bravely at the bewildered man. "I'm sorry to behave like a baby, but you can't *think* how unexpected it was. Just to show you how completely I was taken by surprise, I will own to you what I did. When your note came I actually asked Bernard to read it to me. Ah, forgive me

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"'I'M ASHAMED TO HAVE WRITTEN SUCH STUFF AS THIS,' HE SAID, HOARSELY."

Now you have the plain truth. I have actually not read the whole letter. I can't read it for myself, because Bernard broke my glasses on Saturday, and your writing is too small for me to be able to make it out without them. So you see it is true to say I am not ready to answer you."

She was half laughing, half tearful, wholly adorable and young — a girl once more, but with charms which the unfledged Feodora had never boasted. Meanwhile, as he listened to her faltering words, the man at her side was recapturing his power to think. From the confusion of mind and senses into which her incomprehensible behaviour had thrown him there was beginning to emerge the idea that she was the victim of some error, some trick.

She was under some fatal misapprehension.

I just expected it to be some trifling thing—how could I guess? But as soon as he got to—to that part, of course, I snatched it away; I could not let him finish. There!

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What could he do—how lay his finger on the cause of the mistake?

"Feodora," he said, softly, "have you got it here with you—this stupid note you could not read?"

"Ye-es," owned Feodora, shamefacedly.

"May I," he asked, persuasively—"will you let me read the rest of it to you myself?"

With lowered eyes, she raised her hands and slowly drew it from the folds of her bodice, handing it to Gervase. He opened it, leaning forward with his arms upon his knees, and read the first page—read it, as it were, from her point of view, and saw how easily it might have sounded like the prelude to—something very different.

Bernard had volunteered to read it. In a moment his mind leaped to the truth. He had heard Bernard, on Saturday, speaking of the approach of the first of April. Elderly sisters are fair game.

In his passion of sympathy for Feodora he could have wept.

"I'm ashamed to have written such stuff as this," he said, hoarsely. "It's a good thing you haven't read it. I can put things a little nearer the truth than that." He tore it across and across, laid the bits on the rough grey stone beside him, lit a match, and watched it burn. "I can't think how I had the cheek," he muttered. "If I were to say to you what I had the hardihood to write, I should expect you to get up and laugh in my face. How well it sounds, doesn't it? I loved you, but never had the pluck to tell you so. I let myself be married to a woman I never cared about. I never ceased to hanker for you, but I believed I had forgotten all about you, Feo, until—until I saw you again."

It was almost the truth—as near, perhaps, as one ever comes in human intercourse. As a matter of fact, he had walked home on Saturday convinced that his love was dead. He might have gone on so, seeing and holding communication only with the outward Feodora, had not Bernard's unjustifiable conduct touched the spring, so that the doors of the years rolled back, and his own girl came through them—came back to him out of the past, with dewy eyes and shining hair, and hands outstretched in welcome.

They were sitting side by side, and he caught those hands in his. As once more he felt them, warm and thrilling in his own, he knew that he could never let them go.

"Feo," he said, laughing to hide the fact that his voice would not be controlled, "thank God, without glasses you won't be able to see the crow's-feet round my eyes, nor the grey hairs on my temples. Lucky I have caught you during your days of blindness, my dear. Oh, my dear! Is it possible you always cared?"

After all, it being but the fifth day of the holidays, the vicar let off Bernard lightly. It was in the untold relief of having escaped scot-free that the boy's conscience began to prick him, and he went everywhere, searching for "old Fee."

As he passed the door in the garden wall which gave upon the moor, it was opened from without, and the lovers entered together.

One glance at the doctor's keen face and particularly expressive eyes told Bernard that he knew all. The colour flew to his face, and he braced himself for what he called a "row."

"How do you fancy me as a brother-in-law, Ber?" asked Gervase, genially. "I fancy we shall get on all right. Don't think you can go blackmailing me, though, because you had the impudence to read my love-letter. I've torn it up and burnt the bits, so there is no evidence against me. But it did its work all right; Feodora is going to marry me."

Bernard, meeting those keen eyes with his own fearless blue ones, disconcertingly like Feo's own, gathered another fact. The doctor knew. Old Fee did not. Of course, old Fee never was to know. His eyes said, as plainly as words could have done:—

"All right, old chap. I tumble to it."

It was while Feo's arms were round his neck, and she was bestowing upon him a kiss with which he would fain have dispensed, that he felt his hand touched by that of his prospective brother-in-law, and the grimy fingers closed firmly upon what seemed to be a coin.

It was not until he was safely in the shelter of his own room later on that he fished it out of his pocket, and discovered it to be a sovereign.

"Great Scot!" said he, staring at it with a grin of surprised delight. "Blackmail, he calls it. Right-o! But, I say, you know, he *must* be spoons!"

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The Humours of Doctoring.

By NORMAN PORRITT, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. LOND.,

Consulting Surgeon, Huddersfield Royal Infirmary.

Illustrated by Bert Thomas.

ONE does not associate the sick-room or the work of a doctor with humour. The problems of life and death which confront a doctor by night as well as by day, year in and year out, seem to leave no room for the humorous; whilst the suffering and sorrow, the pathos and the tragedy which fill the long-drawn vigils of the sick-room would seem to elbow humour out. I am prepared to hear that the humour of which the doctor is most cognizant is the ill-humour of some of his patients.

But every one has a funny-bone. One bone—the bone of the arm—is altogether humerus. Wherever there is human nature there will be humour.

There is no finer field for the study of human nature than a sick-room. And the best doctor is he who studies human nature, and treats the individuality as well as the disease of his patient. For the chord of life at the top of the scale vibrates very much as it does at the bottom. Hearts touched in the same way answer with like emotions. In the crises of life, in sudden sorrow or tragic bereavement, the duchess behaves very much after the manner of the seamstress. When the heir of the ducal house was lost he was found bathing with the village lads. "And would you believe it, my lady," said the maid who found him, "but I could see no difference between his little lordship and the village boys!"

To the great comfort of doctors the human body is the same in all ranks of society. And when disease has stripped men of their differences, feelings, emotions, humour, nay, human nature itself, not the veneer of expression which usage and custom have stamped upon it, are found to bubble forth alike in every rank of society. My ears have been tickled by the humour of the well-to do no less than by the wit of the poor and penniless.

Some men are born humorists. They would crack a joke on the most solemn occasions, like the man who, when the doctor remarked that his cough was no better, said he couldn't understand it, as he "had been practising all night"; or like poor Tom Hood, who, when a mustard plaster was put on his wasted frame, observed, "It's a great deal of mustard to very little meat."

Sayings such as these could come only from inveterate jokers. The humorists the doctor sees often utter their funny things unconsciously.

When patients called to see me during my dinner hour because, as they said, "they were sure to find me at home," or when they told me that when I saw two patients at one visit I was "killing two birds with one stone," I gave them credit for being unconscious humorists. The general public is ever ready to give doctors a character for killing. When three doctors approached a sick man's bed, he put up his hands and exclaimed, "Oh, let me die a natural death." A son when asked what his father died of replied, "He didn't have a doctor, he died of himself." An eminent London doctor was having his front door painted, and one of the patients, congratulating the man on his work, said, "Well, my man, you leave things better than you find them." "Yes," answered the painter, "and that is more than the doctor can say."

On one occasion I and one of my colleagues were retained by the local Butchers' Association to examine some meat which had been condemned by the Medical Officer of Health. When the case came for trial one of the witnesses was asked, "Who were present when the meat was examined?" "Oh," the man answered, "Dr. Robinson, Dr. Porritt, and a number of other butchers."

Another character I set down as an unconscious humorist is the man who thinks doctors don't work. I have met several who held such an opinion. One was a man whose daughter had been removed to the fever hospital, much against his will. "You see,"

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"'OH,' THE MAN ANSWERED, 'DR. ROBINSON, DR. PORRITT, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER BUTCHERS.'"

stormed the man, "there's this difference between me and such men as you, I have to work for my living." No doubt he had; he was a coalheaver. I wonder what this man would have said if he had worked straight on for three days and nights, without going to bed, as I have done, or had been up ten nights in one fortnight as I was once, or had been fetched out of bed at six o'clock on the morning of the Sabbath, the day of rest, and had to work straight on without a stop, except for scamped meals, till seven-thirty on Monday morning, as I once did?

A doctor who had had a run of night work was called to a case where an examination of the lungs was necessary. In certain conditions, the sound vibrations are tested by listening to the chest while the patient uses his voice. If the patient counts, one gets the best results. The tired doctor seated himself at the bedside, and too lethargic and listless to use his stethoscope, rested his head upon the patient's chest.

"Count till I tell you to stop," the doctor directed.

"One, two, three," began the patient.

When next the doctor heard him the man was plodding on in steady monotone, "6,121, 6,122, 6,123."

"Good gracious, man, you don't mean to say you've counted over six thousand?"

"I do, doctor. You said I was to count till you told me to stop."

"Dear me. I must have been asleep," replied the doctor, feeling bright and refreshed by the nap he had taken as soon as his weary head rested on the patient.

A young doctor needs every encouragement, and it is not the ablest doctor who makes his way most rapidly. It is the loud talker, the confident asserter, the self-advertiser, the subtle depreciator of his fellows, who jumps quickly into a practice.

"I never have my patients prayed for at church," said one of these men.

"Don't you?" replied the lady. "Dr. Smith always does."

"Yes, of course," the self-sufficient boaster answered. "You see, they need it."

A young doctor may stumble into the good graces of a patient by a fluke, as in the story fathered, like so many stories, upon Abernethy. After a convivial gathering Abernethy was summoned to the aid of a well-to-do lady. When he pulled out his watch and put his fingers on the patient's wrist he could not count the pulse. "Drunk again," he muttered. The next morning he was requested to make an early call to see the lady, who received him most effusively.

"Doctor," she said, "you are the first honest doctor I have had. I *was* drunk." And ever after she was one of Abernethy's staunchest adherents and best patients.

A tactless remark may cause the doctor to lose a patient, as in the case of the doctor who, apologizing for the ineffectiveness of his remedies, said, "You know I cannot make you younger, madam."

"I know you can't," retorted the lady. "I didn't send for you to do that; I sent for you to make me go on growing older."

The desire of the public to know what is

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the matter when anyone is ill and to know the cause of the illness would be humorous if it were not pathetic. They set down a doctor who cannot tell them as an ignorant man. It is sometimes the ignorant doctor who does tell them; the cautious, careful man who withholds his opinion until he can see his way clear is the safe man.

When the late Sir William Gull told the wife of a patient that he could not tell what was the matter with her husband, the wife wrung her hands.

"Is there no one who can tell us?" she beseeched.

"Yes, lots. There are lots ignorant enough to tell you what is the matter with your husband," the great doctor replied.

The messages the doctor receives summoning him to his patients are not infrequently a source of amusement.

The queerest message I ever received was delivered somewhat as follows:—

"We want you to come at once, doctor."

"Which house is it?" I asked.

"Do you know where old Mr. Mellor lives?" the messenger asked.

"But he's dead," I said.

"Is he? Then it's the place opposite."

If the places to which the doctor is summoned are ambiguous the services demanded of him are sometimes remarkable.

"My wife's mother lies at death's door," ran the well-known message. "Come at once and pull her through."

It is said that a famous Leeds doctor, now dead, received a message somewhat as follows:—

"You don't know me, doctor," the messenger said, "but you have attended several of my relatives. You attended my mother, and she died. You attended my sister, and she died. You attended a cousin of mine, and she died. You attended one of my wife's brothers, and he died. And now my wife's mother is ill, and we want you to attend her."

Messages come at all hours, and to cases of every degree of severity or danger. And the humorous part is that the messages to the slight cases are as urgent and peremptory as to the dangerous illnesses, and are sometimes as ambiguous as they are urgent. One day when I reached home I was told that Mrs. Smith desired me to go to her immediately I came in.

"What Mrs. Smith?" I asked.

"Oh, they said you were attending them and would know."

"And didn't the messenger leave the address?"

"No; he said you would know who it was."

At that time I had three Mrs. Smiths under my care, two of them very ill. I hurried to the most seriously ill, found her better and surprised to see me. I scampered off to the other Mrs. Smith who was so ill. She had not sent for me, so I had to trot off to Mrs. Smith No. 3, who I found wanted to know if she ought to take her medicine before or after meals.

A gentleman with whom I was for some time an assistant was summoned in great haste to the infant child of well-to-do parents. Rushing off, to the great chagrin of his wife, who had one of his favourite meals ready to be served as soon as carriage wheels were heard in the yard, he hurried to the aid of the infant sufferer. He found the infant phenomenon, supposed to be almost at death's door, seated at the family tea-table, in its infant's chair, and being regaled with sardines.

"You ought not to give your baby chips," said a doctor to a working woman.

"Then I don't know what I shall have to do," was the reply, "for he won't eat pork."

If there was some excuse for the working woman, there was certainly none for the better-educated, better-informed, well-to-do parents who allowed a mere babe to have sardines.

It is no uncommon experience to find a patient suffering from a disease different to that mentioned in the message the doctor receives. Amateur doctors love to show their knowledge, and some of them make wonderfully shrewd diagnoses. But this was not the case with the person who sent a note to the doctor, asking him to come to a case of smallpox. Hurrying away, the doctor found he had a case of rheumatism to cure.

"Why did you call it smallpox?" he asked.

"Well, doctor," was the reply, "to tell you the truth, there was no one in the house could spell rheumatism, and we thought smallpox would do just as well till you came, and perhaps bring you sooner."

Sometimes it is not only the doctor who needs commiseration, as the following story shows.

There had been an operation for appendicitis, which had passed off quite successfully. On the next day, however, the doctor appeared beside the patient's bed and informed him, with a long face, that it would be necessary to operate again, as most unfortunately he had left the sponge inside. The patient was considerably annoyed, but as there was no

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help for it, the operation was again performed. On the following morning, once more the doctor reappeared at the bedside, and with a face still longer than before informed his patient that this time the scissors had been overlooked.

"Good heavens!" said the patient, "you don't say so! Well, what must be, must be. Cut me open, but for Heaven's sake don't sew me up this time. Put some buttons on."



"HE FOUND THE INFANT PHENOMENON, SUPPOSED TO BE ALMOST AT DEATH'S DOOR, SEATED AT THE FAMILY TEA-TABLE, IN ITS INFANT'S CHAIR, AND BEING REGALED WITH SARDINES."

Another story refers to a medical friend who was disturbed from his bed on a wild night. The rain came down in torrents - the wind was a gale and the sky one stretch of blackness. At his door stood a woman who had come two miles to fetch the doctor. She was dripping wet, and the reflected light of the lamp shone from her soaked shawl and dress.

"Good gracious, Mrs. Jones," asked the doctor, "what are you doing out a wild night like this?"

"I want you to come and see t'child."

"But could your husband not have come?"

"I wanted him to come. But he said I would have to come myself, for he wouldn't turn a dog out on such a night."

The message brings the doctor face to face with the patient, and for humour I give the palm to children. There is something at once so incongruous and innocent, so subtle and yet so unforced, so unexpected and yet so natural in the humour of children. I wish I could remember all the delightful things I have heard from children. One little girl told me that when her brother Jack grew up he was going to be an engine-driver.

"And what are you going to be?" I asked.

"Oh, when I grow up I'm going to be a widow."

Another child asked if she might go for a walk in my carriage; and another, wishing to inflict upon a disobedient doll the most severe punishment she could devise, shook the speechless doll, saying:—

"You naughty girl. But I know what I'll do if you won't behave yourself—I'll send you to live with Dr. Porritt."

A doctor pushed his way into a nursery where the children were playing at holding a service.

"I'm the minister and Doris is the congregation," the boy explained. "We've had the hymns and the prayers and the sermon, and now I'm going to give out the notices.

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You can be one of the congregation." As soon as the doctor had seated himself the boy, pretending to read from a paper in his hand, announced: "On Monday evening, in the senior class-room, at half-past seven, there will be a Christian and Devil meeting."

The little fellow had gone with his parents to service, and in his unaccustomed ears the announcement of the Christian Endeavour meetings had formed itself as he, with mock solemnity, gave out.

When I asked a little boy in pain what sort of a pain it was, "I don't know," he moaned; "I haven't seen it."

A boy I brought into the world came running into the house with the news that the member of Parliament for the borough was dead.

"What will they do with him, now he's dead?" he asked.

"Bury him, love," his mother answered.

"What, in a grave?"

"Yes, in a grave."

"And when I die shall I be buried in a grave?"

"Yes."

"And then I shall be a graven image, shan't I?"

Of the adult patients, some are heroes and heroines, some are cowards, some are grateful, and it is a pleasure to do anything for them; others are surly grumblers it is something of a penance to visit, but of all the difficult ones to deal with the most trying is the suspicious patient who will not give you his confidence.

Then there is the dense patient, from whom it is difficult to get an answer to a simple question. Such a one brings her child to be cured of a cough.

"When did the child begin to cough?" the doctor asks.

"When we gave her the ipecacuanha."

"When did you give the ipecacuanha?"

"Oh, we give it to her whenever she coughs."

"But when did you give it?"

"We give her half a teaspoonful."

"Listen, please; on which day did the child begin to cough? What day was it?"

"It was the day I went to ask my neighbour which doctor to bring her to."

"Tell me the day of the week; was it Monday or Tuesday, or which day?"

"It was a Monday."

"Now we've got at it at last."

"But it wasn't a proper cough."

"Then when did she have a proper cough?"

"When we gave her the ipecacuanha."

Curiosities of dialect, until they are mastered, are embarrassing.

Each district has its own words, peculiar to and restricted to itself. One of the most expressive ways of locating pain was that of the big, stout women who came from the moorland hills between Lancashire and Yorkshire.

"It's all in mi huggins, doctor—such a pain in mi huggins." Then as they pointed out the spot I saw the aptness of the word. The huggins were where they were hugged.

Then there are the strange stories founded upon burlesque views of anatomy and physiology. The human body is a structure of which everyone knows something and supplies the deficiencies of knowledge with ingenious surmise.

"Ah," said the old lady, when the doctor told her she had a cataract in her eye, "that explains why it is always watering." Whilst another woman explained to awe-struck neighbours why her child wept no tears when he cried. "You see, he's got a very big forehead, and I think he must have got water on the brain, and that the cause of it must be that the tears go inside his head, instead of coming outside."

Another suffering from gastric catarrh told a friend that the doctor said he had gas tar on the stomach. "And no wonder, either," he added, "for the corporation has been paving the street, and the smoking tar-boiler has been stood opposite our house many a day."

The largest number of strange diseases come from those who are unfamiliar with medical nomenclature. To a doctor the names of diseases are commonplaces. Doctors rarely speak of consumption, but of phthisis; indigestion is always dyspepsia; dizziness, vertigo; inflammation of the lungs, pneumonia; fainting, syncope; mortification, gangrene; matter is always pus; bleeding from the nose, epistaxis. During his years of training the technical names for disease become as familiar to the doctor as bogey, dormy, brassy, and cleek to the golfer. For medical nomenclature is a weird and wonderful thing. Nosology, instead of being concerned with the nose, is the science of doses. Rhinology, instead of treating of the River Rhine, refers to diseases of the nose; bacteriology has nothing to do either with the back or tears, but is the science of germs; etiology treats of the causes of disease, and not of meal times.

When one knows that doctors use such names, to quote only a few, as transduodenal

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choledochostomy, endo-aneurysmorrhaphy, choledocho-enterostomy, appendicectomy, appendicostomy, as well as appendicitis, hypertrophic pulmonary osteo-arthropathy, cheiro-pompholyx, polio-encephalomyelitis, and that they sometimes stumble over them,



"'AH,' SAID THE OLD LADY, WHEN THE DOCTOR TOLD HER SHE HAD A CATARACT IN HER EYE, 'THAT EXPLAINS WHY IT IS ALWAYS WATERING.'"

we shall not be surprised to find that those to whom medical terms are a foreign tongue make ludicrous yet natural mistakes. But even those who are understood to have some special knowledge, the reporters, to whom we owe so much, occasionally trip and stumble. When Mr. Gladstone lay on his deathbed and the progress of his illness was watched from day to day, and everyone turned to the latest reports in the paper, I was much amused to read, when the illustrious statesman became worse, that the "change stroke" had appeared in his breathing. Who ever heard of a change stroke in the breathing of anybody? But there is a type of breathing called "Cheyne-Stokes," after the men who first described it. The breathing seems to stop, then gradually resumes, the breaths come faster and faster until they die down again almost to a standstill. That is Cheyne-Stokes breathing, which the reporters described as "the change stroke."

Then patients have had haricot veins, instead of varicose veins. There is the man with indignation in the liver, and the lady with indiscretion in the stomach, which prevented her from domesticating her food. Another complained of an adulterated stomach and insufficiency of bile to justify her food; one man complained of an affectation of the bronchittal tubes, and some of such things as ulsters in the throat, inflammation of the consols, instead of the tonsils, an affection which at the present time would probably be greatly appreciated on the Stock Exchange.

One woman told me that her husband had died of a kangaroo in his leg. The case was inexplicable until I discovered that the man's leg mortified. The doctor's name for mortification is gangrene, which had gone through the changes of gangereen, gangeroo, and so to kangaroo.

To understand and solve the riddles of disease doctors have to make many inquiries into the diseases and illnesses of the family and other relatives of the patient. I shall always remember the shock I got when I asked one woman the cause of her father's death.

"Tell him," she nudged her friend.

"Please sir," explained the friend, "he was 'hanged."

The woman was the daughter of a murderer.

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But the perversions of language are not necessarily confined to medical terms. The native Anglo-Saxon tongue provides pitfalls for everybody.

"My little boy is much better," said a fond mother; "you may know he is when I tell you he's had juggled rabbit for dinner."



"'BUT WHAT HAS THAT GOT TO DO WITH POPPY-HEAD TEA?' THE DOCTOR ASKED."

And the intricacies of our common tongue have led to misunderstandings, some of them serious, some ending in a good laugh when the cause of the mistake is explained.

"Do you feel better?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, yes," replied the patient.

"Then you take your food with a relish now?"

"No, I never take nothing with it," said the man.

But sometimes serious consequences follow misunderstood directions. A story is told of a doctor who ordered poppy-head tea for the patient.

"He's much better," the man's wife said next day. "But I don't know what he'll say when he hears. They were a pedigree strain, and he was so proud of them and expecting them to take prizes."

"But what has that got to do with poppy-head tea?" the doctor asked.

"Why, doctor, I did just as you told me. You said give him puppy-head tea; and I was determined he should have whatever you ordered if it would do him good, and so I cut off their heads and boiled them and he had the tea, and I'm sure it's done him good, and that's everything."

Another doctor who had ordered leeches found the patient no better on his next visit.

"Did they draw much blood?" he asked.

"How could they draw blood?" answered the wife. "I chopped them up and he had them for his tea, same as cockles."

The story of the patient who never got his medicine because it was ordered to be taken in a recumbent posture and there wasn't such a thing in the house is familiar, but the story of the patient who was ordered champagne and oysters is less known.

"You see, doctor, as we couldn't get what you ordered we got the nearest thing to it," the wife explained.

"What was that?"

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"Pop and cockles."
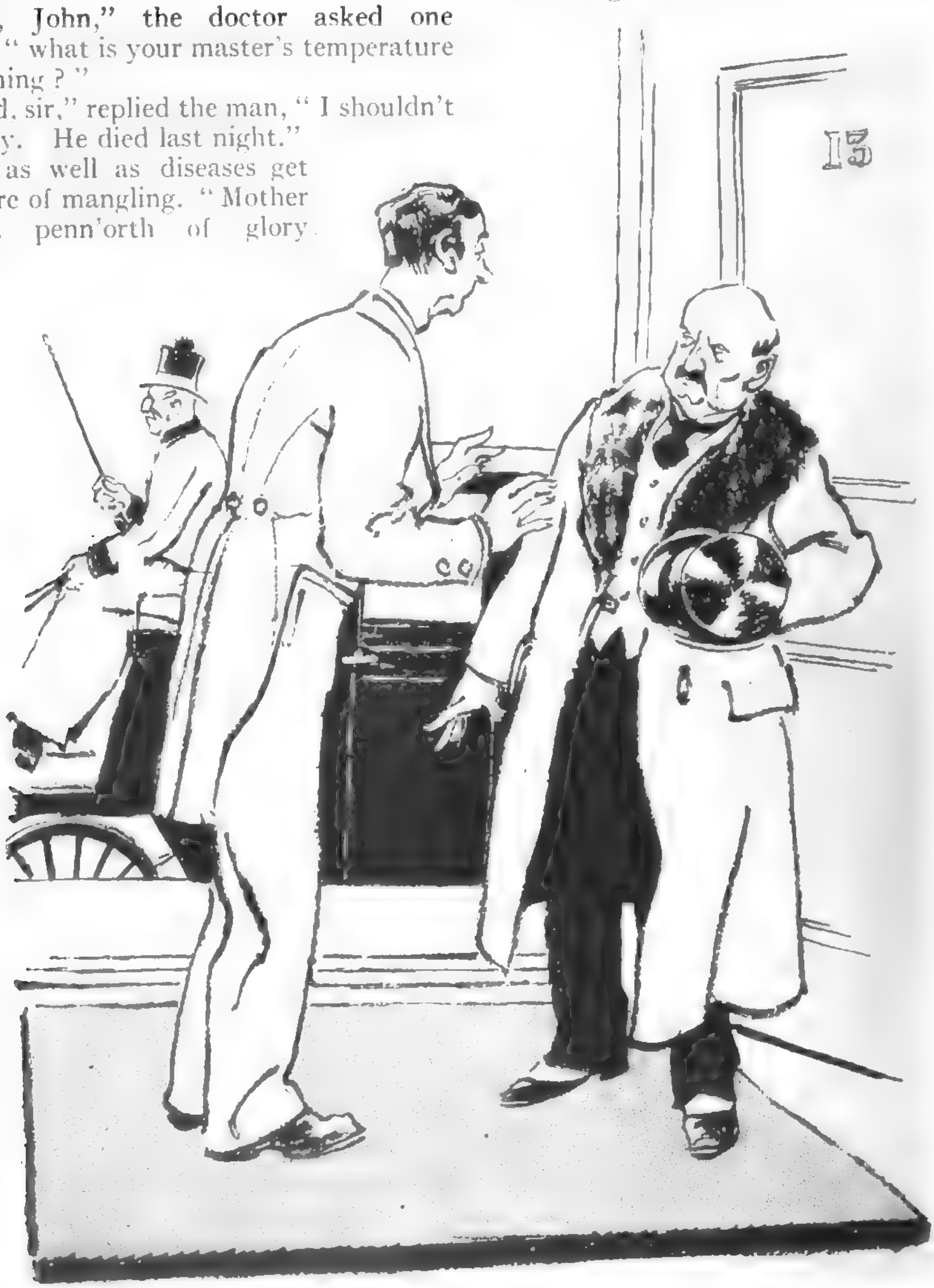
Another is told of a butler who, during his master's illness, learnt how to take the temperature. On the doctor's visit the first inquiry was always the height of the patient's temperature.

"Well, John," the doctor asked one morning, "what is your master's temperature this morning?"

"'Deed, sir," replied the man, "I shouldn't like to say. He died last night."

Drugs as well as diseases get their share of mangling. "Mother wants a penn'orth of glory divine."

grocer's supplement; Scott's emulsion as Scotch emotion; belladonna plaster as Bernard Donald's plaster; phosphorus paste as prosperous paste; paregoric as Paddy's glory; and Benger's food as vengeance food; whilst a girl attributed her recovery to the



"'DEED, SIR,' REPLIED THE MAN, 'I SHOULDN'T LIKE TO SAY. HE DIED LAST NIGHT.'"

"We don't keep that," said the chemist.

"Oh, yes! you do," the little maid retorted. "We've got it here before. Mother puts it down the drain in the back yard."

Then the chemist knew that glory divine was another way of saying chloride of lime.

Corrosive sublimate has masqueraded as "God deliver all" she had taken. She meant cod-liver oil.

I have referred to strange and perverted feelings as the starting-points of strange complaints, and may now say a word on the strange manner in which people treat or prevent disease. The strangest remedy I ever heard of was one a patient told me she

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discovered in a dream. She dreamt that I ordered her to be enveloped from head to foot—with only her head sticking out—in one big poultice of warm potted meat.

But one comes in contact with beliefs and practices that are something more than the fabric of a dream. The surprising thing is that it is not only sensitive women and hysterical girls who adopt them, but shrewd, level-headed men. One of the cutest business men I knew never went anywhere without a raw potato in his pocket. He said it kept off rheumatism; and many wear the talismanic rings which are said to ward off

"Who are you in black for?" he asked.

"For thee," said the wife. "If anything had happened thee, I don't know how I could have got another rig out for the bairns. So I thought I might as well be ready for t'worst, and if thou does happen to get better, there's no harm done, thou knows, and t'bairns has had their new things."

A lady visitor calling to see a man who had been very ill was delighted to find he had taken a turn for the better, and left with the hope that he would soon be up and about. Calling again in a few days she was surprised to see that he was still in bed.



"'WHO ARE YOU IN BLACK FOR?' HE ASKED."

that painful affection. Then there are those who cannot sleep unless glass insulators support the feet of their bed.

Another keen business man called to pay a bill for my attendance on his wife.

"You see," he said, "whilst you were attending we rubbed her with liniment we got from R—— (a well-known quack), and as it's that that did her good, I've deducted what it cost us from your note and you'll have to be content with the balance."

In the North, Whitsuntide is a time for rejoicing and a great time for new clothes. A Yorkshireman who lay ill in hospital instructed his wife that the children must have their new clothes as usual. To please him the matron of the hospital allowed the wife and children to visit the patient on Whit-Sunday afternoon. To his surprise they came wearing mourning.

"You see, miss," the wife explained, "it's this way. When the doctor gave him up, and we thought he wouldn't get better, we sold his clothes."

But for the humorous incidents which brighten the work of a doctor and stand out the more sharply for the dark background in which they are set, the life of the doctor, face to face with sorrow, sickness, and bereavement, from one year to another, would be more depressing than it is. It is a hard life, and the recompense, if compared with the rewards in other callings for an equal amount of labour, miserably inadequate. And the doctor, in his quiet moments, wonders if he would not have done better for his wife and family in some other calling. But as another day dawns he manfully faces his task, drawn to it by something higher and nobler than mere pecuniary reward.

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THE WOOING OF WEE MACGREEGOR.

By J. J. BELL.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

[Most of us have a warm place in our hearts for Wee Macgreegor and Christina, those delightful children whose sayings and doings Mr. J. J. Bell has described in two of his best-known books. Unlike Peter Pan, however, they have not refused to grow up, and now Mr. Bell has carried out the happy idea of bringing them together into one story, in which he relates, with a charm and humour that go straight to the heart of the reader, the joys and trials of their courtship.]

FIRST PART.

I.

MRS. ROBINSON conveyed sundry dishes from the oven, also the teapot from the hob, to the table.

"Come awa'," she said, briskly, seating herself. "We'll no' wait for Macgreegor."

"Gie him five minutes, Lizzie," said Mr. Robinson.

"I'm in nae hurry," remarked Gran'paw Purdie, who had come up from the coast that afternoon.

"I'm awfu' hungry, maw," piped a young voice.

"Whisht, Jimsie," whispered daughter Jeannie.

Said Mrs. Robinson, a little impatiently: "Come awa', come awa', afore everything gets spiled. Macgreegor has nae business to be that late." She glanced at the clock. "He's been the same a' week. Haste ye, John."

John opened his mouth, but, catching his wife's eye, closed it again without speech.

Excepting Jimsie, they came to the table rather reluctantly.

"Ask a blessin', fayther," murmured Lizzie.

"Shut yer eyes," muttered Jeannie to her little brother, while she restrained his eager paw from reaching a cookie.

Mr. Purdie's white head shook slightly as he said grace; he had passed his five-and-seventieth birthday, albeit his spirit was cheerful as of yore; in his case old age seemed to content itself with an occasional mild reminder.

John distributed portions of stewed finnan haddie, Lizzie poured out the tea, while Jeannie methodically prepared a small feast for the impatient Jimsie. Gran'paw Purdie beamed on the four, but referred surreptitiously at brief intervals to his fat silver watch.

"Ye see, Maister Purdie," John was explaining, "Macgreegor's busy the noo at a job in the West-end, an' that's the reason he's late for his tea."

"'Deed, aye. It's a lang road for him to come hame," said the old man. "An' is he still likin' the pentin' trade?"

"Aye, aye. An' he's gettin' on splendid —jist splendid!"

"It's time enough to be sayin' that," Lizzie interposed. "He's no' ony furder on nor a lad o' his age ought to be. I'm no' sayin' he's daein' badly, fayther; but there's nae sense in boastin' aboot what's jist or'nar'. Na, Jimsie, it's no' time for jeelly yet. Tak' what Jeannie gies ye, laddie. Aye, the least said——"

"But his employer's pleased wi' him; he tell't me as much, wife," said John. "An' if ye compare Macgreegor wi' that young scamp, Wullie Thomson——"

"Oh, if ye compare a man wi' a monkey, I dare say it's no' sae bad for the man. But, really, John——"

"It's easy seen," said gran'paw, once more consulting his watch, "that Macgreegor's workin' for his wages. Surely he'll be gettin' overtime the nicht. I hope his employer's a kind man."

"I've nae doot aboot that," Lizzie returned. "He gies Macgreegor money for the car when he's workin' in the West-end."

"That's a proper maister!" cried Mr. Purdie, while John smiled as much as to say, "Aye, he kens Macgreegor's value!"

"An' I'm thinkin'," Lizzie continued, "that Macgreegor walks hame an' keeps the pennies to buy ceegarettes."

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"What?" exclaimed the old man. "Has the laddie commenced the smokin' a'ready?"

"Oh, naething to speak aboot," said John, a trifle apologetically. "They commence earlier than they did in your day, I suppose, Maister Purdie. No' that I wud smoke a ceegarette if I was paid for 't."

"*I* can smoke," declared Jimsie, indiscreetly. Jeannie pressed his arm.

John guffawed. Gran'paw looked amused until Lizzie demanded: "What's that ye're sayin', Jimsie?"

"But I'm no' a reg'lar smoker," mumbled Jimsie, crestfallen.

"Aye," said John, with a jocular wink at his father-in-law, "ye're feart ye singe yer whiskers, ma mannie."

"John," said Lizzie, "it's naething to joke aboot. Jimsie, if ever I catch ye at the smokin', I'll stop yer Seturday penny an' gie ye castor ile instead. D'ye hear?"

"Hoots!" cried gran'paw, "that's a terrible severe-like punishment, Lizzie."

"I wud raither tak' ile twicet an' get the penny," quoth Jimsie.

Lizzie was about to speak when the bell rang.

Jeannie slipped from her chair. "I'll gang, maw," she said, and went out.



Gran'paw Purdie

"It's Macgreegor," remarked John. "Hae ye kep' his haddie hot for him, Lizzie?"

"What for wud I dae that?" retorted Mrs. Robinson, in a tone of irony, going over to the oven and extracting a covered dish.

She came back to the table as her son entered, a very perceptible odour of his trade about him—an odour which she still secretly disliked though nearly three years had gone since her first whiff of it. "What kep' ye?" she inquired, pleasantly enough.

It is possible that Macgregor's dutiful greeting to his grandfather prevented his answering the question. He returned his father's smile, glanced at his mother, who was engaged in filling his cup, winked at his young brother, and took his place at the table, between the two men.

"Ye'll be wearied," remarked John.

"No' extra," he replied, stretching his tired legs under cover of the table.

"Did ye walk?" his mother asked, passing him his tea.

"Aye."

"It'll be three mile," said John.

"What way did ye no' tak' the car, laddie?" inquired Lizzie.

"I'd as sune walk," he replied, shortly.

"It's fine to save the siller—eh, Macgreegor?" said Mr. Purdie.

Macgregor reddened slightly.

"I'm no' complainin' o' Macgreegor walkin' when he micht tak' the car," said Lizzie, "but I wud like to see him puttin' his savin's to some guid purpose."

At these words Macgregor went a dull red and set down his cup with a clatter.

"Hae ye burnt yer mooth?" asked John, with quick sympathy.

"Naw," was the ungracious reply. "It's naebody's business whether I tak' the car or tramp it."

There was a short silence. An outbreak of temper on Macgregor's part was not of frequent occurrence. Then John turned the conversation to a big fire that had taken place in Glasgow the previous night, and the son finished his meal in silence.

At the earliest possible moment Macgregor left the kitchen. A few minutes later he was in the little room which belonged to him and Jimsie. On the inside of the door was a bolt, screwed there by himself some months ago. He shot it now.

He donned a clean collar and his Sunday tie.

Then he looked closely at his face in the mirror hanging near the window. He was not a particularly good-looking lad, yet his countenance suggested nothing coarse or mean. His features as features, however, did not concern him now. From his vest-

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pocket he brought a knife, with a blade thinned by stone and polished by leather. He tried its keen edge on his thumb, shook his head, and applied the steel to his boot. Presently he began to scrape his upper-lip. It pained him, and he desisted. Not for the first time he wished he had a real razor.

Finally he took from his pockets a key and two pennies. He opened a drawer in the old chest and placed the pennies in a disused tobacco-tin, which already contained a few coins. He knew very well the total sum therein, but he reckoned it up once more. One shilling and sevenpence.

Every Saturday he handed his wages to his mother, who returned him sixpence. His present hoard was the result of two weeks' abstinence from cigarettes and walking instead of taking the car. He knew the job in the West-end would take at least another week, which meant another sixpence, and the coming Saturday would bring a second sixpence. Total in the near future, two shillings and sevenpence. He smiled uncertainly and locked up the treasure. A minute later he slipped quietly into the passage and took his cap from its peg.

The kitchen door opened.

"Whaur are ye gaun, Macgreegor?" his mother asked.

"Oot," he replied, briefly, and went. Going down the stairs he felt sorry somehow. Sons often feel sorry somehow, but mothers may never know it.

When Lizzie, hiding her hurt, had shut the kitchen door, Mr. Purdie said, softly: "That question an' that answer, ma dear, are as auld as human natur'."

As Macgregor turned out of the tenement close he encountered his one-time chum, Willie Thomson. Macgregor might not have admitted it to his parents, but during the last few weeks he had been finding Willie's company less and less desirable.



WEE MACGREEGOR'S HOME.

Willie now put precisely the same question that Mrs. Robinson had put a minute earlier.

"I'll maybe see ye later," was Macgregor's evasive response, delivered awkwardly. He passed on.

"Hae ye a ceegarette on ye?" cried Willie, taking a step after him.

"Na," said Macgregor, ungraciously.

"Ye're in a queer hurry."

"I'll maybe see ye later," said Macgregor again, increasing his speed in a curious guilty fashion.

He passed from the quiet street wherein he lived into one of Glasgow's highways, aglow with electric light, alive with noise out of all proportion to its traffic. He continued to walk swiftly, his alert eyes betraying his eagerness, for the distance of a couple of blocks. Then into another quiet street he turned, and therein his pace became slower and slower, until it failed altogether. Beneath a gas lamp he questioned his watch, his expression betokening considerable anxiety.

It was a fine October night, but chilly—not that he gave any sign of feeling cold. For a space he remained motionless, gazing up the street.

From one of the closes a girl emerged and came towards him.

II.

MACGREGOR's acquaintance with Jessie Mary was almost as old as himself; yet only within the last three months had he recognized her existence as having aught of importance to do with his own. This recognition had followed swift on the somewhat sudden discovery that Jessie Mary was pretty.

The discovery was made at a picnic, organized by a section of the great drapery store wherein Jessie Mary found employment, Macgregor's presence at the outing being accounted for by the fact that in a weak moment he had squandered a money gift

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from his grandparents on the purchase of two tickets for Katie, his first love (so far as we know), and himself. The picnic was a thorough success, but neither Macgregor nor Katie enjoyed it. It was not so much that anything came between them as that something that had been between them departed —evaporated. There was no quarrel ; merely a dullness, a tendency to silence, increasing in dreariness as the bright day wore on. And at last, in the railway compartment on the way home, they sat, crushed together by the crowd, Katie dumb with dismay, Macgregor steeped in gloom.

Opposite them sat Jessie Mary and her escort, a young man with sleek hair, a pointed nose, several good teeth, and a small but exquisite black moustache. These two were gay along with the majority of the occupants of the carriage. Perhaps in her simple sixteen-year-old heart Katie began to realize that she was deserted indeed ; perhaps Macgregor experienced prickings of shame, not that he had ever given or asked promises. Still, it is to be hoped that he did not remember then any of Katie's innocent little advances of the past.

Macgregor was caught by the vivacious dark eyes of Jessie Mary, snared by her impudent red mouth, held by the charm of her face, which the country sun had tinted with an unwonted bloom. Alas for the little brown mouse at his side ! At briefer and briefer intervals he allowed his gloomy glance to rest on the girl opposite, while he became more and more convinced that the young man with the exquisite moustache was a "blether-in' idiot." Gradually he shifted his position to the very edge of the seat, so as to lessen his contact with Katie. And when Jessie Mary, without warning, presented to his attention her foot in its cheap, stylish shoe, saying : "I wish ye wud tie ma lace, Macgreegor," a strange wild thrill of pride ran through his being, though, to be sure, he went scarlet to the ears and his fingers could scarce perform their office.



And now she was approaching him. For the life of him he could neither advance nor retire. Still, such of his wits as had remained faithful informed him that it was "stupid-like" to do nothing at all. Whereupon he drew out his watch and appeared to be profoundly interested in the time.

"Halloa !" Jessie Mary remarked, carelessly. "Fancy meetin' you, as the man said to the sassige-roll !"

"Did ye no' expec' to meet me ?" He stumbled over the words.

Jessie Mary laughed lightly, mockingly. "I wasna aware yer best girl lived in this street."

"It—it's no' the first time ye've seen me here," he managed to say.

She laughed again.

"Weel, that's true. I wonder wha the girl is ?" He would have told her if he could, poor boy. "But I must hurry," she went on, "or the shops'll be shut."

"Can I no' gang wi' ye ?" he asked, with a great effort.

"Oh, ye can come as far as Macrorie's," she answered, graciously, mentioning a provision shop.

Young love is ever grateful for microscopic mercies, and Macgregor's spirit took courage as he fell into step with her. Jessie Mary was a handsomely-built young woman ; her shoulder was quite on a level with his. There were times when he would fain have been taller ; times, also, when he would fain have been older, for Jessie Mary's years exceeded his own by two. Nevertheless, he was now thinking of her age without reference to his own. He was, in fact, about to speak of it when Jessie Mary said :—

"I'm to get to the United Ironmongers' dance on Friday week, after a'. When fayther was at his tea the nicht he said I could gang."

She might as well have poured a jug of ice-water over him. "Aw, did he ?" he murmured, feebly.

"Ye should come, Macgreegor," she con-

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tinued. "Only three-an'-six for a ticket admittin' lady an' gent."

"Och, I'm no' heedin' aboot dancin'," said Macgregor, knowing full well that his going was out of the question.

"It'll be a splendid dance. They'll keep it up till three," she informed him.

"Aye, ye'll hae plenty offers," he said, drearily.

"I'm seriously thinking o' wearin' pink," she told him, as they turned into the main street. "It's maybe a wee thing common, but I've been told it suits me."

Macgregor wondered who had told her, and



"HE WENT SCARLET TO THE EARS AND HIS FINGERS COULD SCARCE PERFORM THEIR OFFICE."

With his heart in his mouth he inquired who was taking her to the dance.

"Oh, I haena decided yet." She gave her head a becoming little toss. "I've several offers. I'll let them quarrel in the meantime."

observed that pink was a bonny colour. "But—but ye wud look fine in ony auld thing."

"Nane o' yer flattery!" she said, with a coquettish laugh.

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"I wud like fine to see ye at the dance," he said, with a sigh.

"Come, an' I'll gie ye a couple o' dances—three, if I can spare them." Hitherto Jessie Mary had regarded Macgregor as a mere boy and sometimes as a bit of a nuisance, but she was the sort of young woman who cannot have too many strings to her bow. "I can get ye a ticket," she added, encouragingly.

"It's nae use speakin' aboot the dance," he said, regretfully. Then, abruptly: "Yer birthday's on Tuesday week, is't no'?"

Jessie Mary looked at him. His eyes were on the pavement.

"Wha tell't ye that?"

"I heard ye speakin' aboot yer birthday to somebody at the picnic."

"My, ye've a memory!"

"But it's on Tuesday week—the twinty-third? I was wantin' to be sure."

"Weel, it's the twinty-third, sure enough." She heaved an affected sigh. "Nineteen! I'm gettin' auld, Macgreegor. Time I was gettin' a lad! Eh?" She laughed at his confusion of face. "But what for d'ye want to ken aboot ma birthday?" she innocently inquired, becoming graver.

The ingenuousness of the question helped him.

"Aw, I jist wanted to ken, Jessie Mary. Never heed aboot it. I hope ye'll enjoy the dance—when it comes." This was quite a long speech for Macgregor to make, but it might have been even longer had they not just then arrived at the provision shop.

"Here we are," said she, cheerfully. She had the decency to ignore the smile of the young man behind the counter—the young man with the sharp nose and exquisite black moustache; nor did she appear to notice another young man on the opposite pavement who was also gazing quite openly at her. "Here we are, an' here we part—to meet again, I hope," she added, with a softer glance.

"I'll wait till ye've got yer messages," said Macgregor, holding his ground.

She gave him her sweetest smile but one. "Na, Macgreegor; it'll tak' me a while to get the messages, an' I've ither places to gang afterwards. Maybe I'll see ye floatin' aroun' anither nicht."

"But I'm no' in a hurry. I—I wish ye wud let me wait."

Her very sweetest smile was reserved for the most stubborn cases, and she gave it him now. But her voice, though gentle, was quite firm. "If ye want to please me, Macgreegor, ye'll no' wait the nicht."

He was conquered. She nodded kindly and entered the doorway.

"Guid-bye, Jessie Mary," he murmured, and turned away.

There were no other customers in the shop. Jessie Mary took a seat at the counter. The young man, stroking his moustache, gave her a good evening tenderly.

"I'm to get to the dance," she said, solemnly.

The young man's hand fell to his side. "Wi' me?" he cried, very eagerly.

"I haena made up ma mind yet, Peter. I want a pair o' kippers—the biggest ye've got."

III.

THE outside of the shop had been painted but recently. Above door and window were blazoned in large gilt letters the words:—

STATIONERY & FANCY GOODS.

Just over the doorway was very modestly printed in white the name of the proprietor:—

M. TOD.

What the "M" stood for nobody knew (or cared), unless, perhaps, the person so designated; and it is almost conceivable that she had forgotten, considering that for five-and-thirty years she had never heard herself addressed save as Miss Tod.

For five-and-thirty years M. Tod had kept her shop without assistance. For five-and-thirty years she had lived in the shop and its back room, rarely going out of doors except to church on Sunday mornings. A time had been when M. Tod saved money, but the last ten years had witnessed a steady shrinking of custom, a dwindling in hopes for a peaceful, comfortable old age, a shrinking and dwindling in M. Tod herself. A day came when a friendly customer and gossip was startled to behold M. Tod suddenly flop to the floor behind the counter.

A doctor, hastily summoned, brought her back to a consciousness of her drab existence and dingy shop. She was soon ready to go on with both as though nothing had happened. The doctor, however, warned her quite frankly that if she did not take proper nourishment, moderate exercise, and abundance of fresh air, she would speedily find herself beyond need of these things.

Obedience to the doctor would involve considerable personal expenditure, not to mention the engaging of an assistant. When M. Tod had reckoned up the remnants of her savings and estimated

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her financial position generally, she incontinently groaned. Nevertheless, she presently proceeded to prepare a two-line advertisement for the *Evening Express*. She was still in the throes of composition, endeavouring to say in twenty words what she thought in two hundred, when Mr. Baldwin, traveller for a firm of fancy-goods merchants, entered the shop. Acquainted with his kindly manner in the past, she ventured to confide to him her present difficulties.

Mr. Baldwin was not only sympathetic, but helpful.

"Why," said he, "my niece Christina might suit you—in fact, I'm sure she would. She is nearly sixteen, and only yesterday finished a full course of book-keeping. More than that, Miss Tod, she has had experience in the trade. Her aunt before her marriage to—er—myself—had a little business like your own, at the coast. I had thought of getting Christina a situation in the wholesale, but I believe it would be better for her to be here, for a time at least. I know she is keen on a place where she can have her own way—I mean to say, have room to carry out her own ideas." Mr. Baldwin halted in some confusion, but speedily recovered. "Anyway," he went on, "give her a trial. Let me send her along to see you this evening."

That evening Christina came, saw, and, after a little hesitation, conquered her doubts as to the suitability of the situation. "I'll manage her easy," she said to herself, while attending with the utmost demureness to M. Tod's recital of the duties required of her assistant—"I'll manage her easy."

Within six months she had made good her unuttered words.

It was Saturday afternoon. M. Tod was about to leave the shop for an airing. Time takes back no wrinkles, yet M. Tod seemed younger than a year ago. She had lost the withered, yellowed complexion of those who worship continually in the Temple of Tannin; her movements were freer; her voice no longer fell at the end of every sentence on a note of hopelessness. She glanced round her shop with an air of pride.

From behind the counter Christina, with a kindly, faintly amused smile, watched her.

"Aye," remarked M. Tod, "everything looks vera nice—vera nice indeed, dearie. I can see ye've done yer best to follow ma instructions."



"STATIONERY AND FANCY GOODS."

It had become a habit with M. Tod to express observations of this sort prior to going out—a habit, also, to accept all Christina's innovations and improvements as originally inspired by herself. Happily Christina had no difficulty in tolerating such gentle injustices; as a matter of fact, she preferred that her mistress should be managed unawares.

"Tak' a squint at the window when ye gang oot," she said, pleasantly. "Ye haena seen it since it was dressed. There's a heap o' cheap trash in it, but it's trash that draws the public nooadays."

"Oh, I wudna say that, dearie," said the old woman. "I've aye tried to gie folk guid value."

"Aye, ma aunt was like that—near ruined hersel' tryin' to gie the public what it didna want. What the public wants is gorgeousness—an' it wants it cheap."

"Weel, weel," Miss Tod mildly interrupted, "it's maybe as ye say, an' I canna deny that custom's improvin'. But it's a sad pity that folk winna buy the best——"

"Oh, let the folk pity theirsels—when they get sense, an' that'll no' be this year. Come here for a minute till I sort yer bonnet, or ye'll be lossin' twa o' yer grapes. I hear figs an' onions is to be the favourite trimmin' next spring. Ye could dae wi' a new bonnet, Miss Tod."

"So I could," the old woman wistfully admitted, as she submitted her head-gear to

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her assistant's deft fingers. "I couldna say when I got this yin."

"Oh, I'm no' keen on dates. But"—encouragingly—"we'll tak' stock next week, an' when we've struck the half-year's balance I'll no' be surprised if ye tak' the plunge an' burst a pound-note at the milliner's." Christina administered a final pat to the ancient bonnet. "Noo ye're ready for the road. See an' no' catch cold. I'll hae the kettle at the bile against yer return at five."

"I'll no' be late," replied M. Tod, who, to tell the truth, was already wishing it were tea-time, and departed.

Christina looked round the shop to see if aught required her attention; then, being satisfied that naught could be improved, she seated herself on the stool and prepared to do a little book-keeping.

As she dipped her pen, however, the door of the shop was slowly opened, the bell above it banged, and a young man—so she reckoned him—came in. In her quick way, though she had never seen him before, she put him down in her mind as a purchaser of a halfpenny football paper. But, having recovered from the alarm of the bell and carefully shut the door, he hesitated, surveying his surroundings.



Miss Tod

Christina flung back her thick plait of fair hair, slipped from the stool, and came to attention.

"Nice day," she remarked, in her best manner. She contrived to get away from the vernacular in her business dealings.

"Aye." The young man smiled absently.

"Nice teeth," thought Christina.

"Was it anything special you wanted to see?" she inquired.

Macgregor regarded her for a moment. "I had a look at yer window," he said, his eyes wandering on e more, "but I seen naething dearer nor a shillin'."

"Oh!" exclaimed Christina. Then, recovering her dignity: "The window is merely a popular display. We have plenty of more expensive goods within." She felt pleased at having said "within" instead of "inside."

At the word "expensive" Macgregor shrank. "Aboot half a croon?" he said, diffidently, taking a step towards the door.

"Half a crown *and* upwards," replied Christina, very distinctly. As a matter of fact, the shop contained few articles priced as high as two shillings, the neighbourhood not being noted for its affluence; but one of Christina's mottoes was "First catch your customer and then rook him." "Oh, yes," she added, pleasantly, "our goods at half a crown are abundant."

For a moment Macgregor doubted she was laughing at him, but a veiled glance at her earnest face reassured him—nay, encouraged him. He had never bought a present for a lady before, and felt his position keenly. Indeed, he had left his home district to make the purchase in order that he might do so unrecognized.

So, with a shy, appealing smile, he said: "It's for a present."

"A present. Certainly!" she replied, lapsing a trifle in the excitement of the moment. "Male or female?"

Macgregor gave her an honest stare.

"Is it for a lady or gent?" she inquired, less abashed by the stare than annoyed with herself for having used the wrong phrase.

"Lady," said Macgregor, with an attempt at boldness, and felt himself getting hot.

"Will you kindly step this way?" came the polite invitation.

Macgregor proceeded to the counter and bumped his knee against the chair that stood there.

"Useful or ornamental?"

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"I—I dinna ken," he answered, between his teeth.

"I'll break that chair's neck for it some day!" cried Christina, her natural sympathy for suffering getting the better of her commercial instincts. Then she coughed in her best style. "Do you think the young lady would like something to wear?"

"I dinna ken, I'm sure." Macgregor pushed back his cap and scratched his head. "Let's see what ye've got for wearin' an'—an' no' for wearin'."

Christina, too, nearly scratched her head. She was striving to think where she could lay hands on articles for which she could reasonably charge half a crown.

Without noticeable delay she turned to a drawer, and presently displayed a small green oblong box. She opened it.



"This is a nice fountain-pen," she explained. "It's price has been reduced——"

"Aw, I'm no' heedin' aboot reduced things, thank ye a' the same."

"I'll make it two shillings to you," Christina said, persuasively. "That's a very drastic reduction." Which was perfectly true. On the other hand, the pen was an old model which she had long despaired of selling. "Nothing could be more suitable for a young lady," she added, exhibiting the nib. "Real gold."

But Macgregor shook his head.

With apparent cheerfulness she laid the pen aside. "It's for a *young* lady, I think you said?"

"Aye, it's for a young lady; but she's no' that young either. Aboot ma ain age, maybe."

Christina nearly said, "About twelve, I suppose," but refrained. She was learning to subdue her tendency to chaff. "I perceive," she said, gravely. "Is she fond of needlework?"

"I couldna say. She's gettin' a pink dress, but I think her mither's sewin' it for her."

"A pink dress!" muttered Christina, forgetting herself. "Oh, Christopher Columbus!" She turned away sharply.

"Eh?"

"She'll be a brunette?" said Christina, calmly, though her cheeks were flushed.

"I couldna say," said Macgregor again.

Christina brought forward a tray of glittering things. "These combs are much worn at present," she informed him. "Observe the jewels."

"They'll no' be real," said Macgregor, doubtfully.

"Well—a—no. Not exactly *real*. But everybody weers—wears imitation jewellery nowadays. The West-end's full of it—chock-a-block, in fact." She held up a pair of combs of almost blinding beauty. "Chaste—ninepence each."

"Aye," sighed Macgregor, "but I'm no' sure——"

"Silver belt — quite the rage — one shilling."

Macgregor remembered a scarlet belt at the picnic. He had a vague vision of a gift of his in its place. He held out his hand for the glittering object.

"You don't happen to know the size of the lady's waist?" said Christina, in a most discreet tone of voice.

"I couldna say." He laid down the belt, but kept looking at it.

"Excuse me," she said, softly, lifting the belt and fastening it round her waist. She was wearing a navy skirt and a scarlet flannel shirt, with a white collar and black tie. "My waist is just about medium." She proceeded to put the combs in her hair. "Of course they would look better on a brunette." She permitted herself the faintest of smiles. "But you can see how they look when they're being worn."

Was there a hint of mockery in the bright grey-blue eyes? Macgregor did not observe it; nor was he shocked by the crudity and gaudiness of the ornaments in broad daylight.

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But perhaps the general effect was not so shocking.

"I'll tak' them," he said, uneasily, and put his hand in his pocket.

"Thank you," said Christina. "Will that be all to-day?"

"Aye, that'll be a'." He had purposed spending the odd penny of his fund on a birthday card, but for some undefinable reason let the coin fall back into his pocket.

Christina proceeded to make a neat parcel. "You're a stranger here," she remarked, pleasantly.

"Aye. But I dinna live far awa'." Now that the ordeal was over he was feeling more at ease. "Ye've a nice shop, miss."

"Do you think so? I'm very glad you got something to suit you in it. Thank you! Half a crown—two-and-six exactly. *Good* afternoon!"

It may be that Macgregor would have stopped to make a remark or two on his own account, but just then an elderly woman entered the shop.



"'EXCUSE ME,' SHE SAID, SOFTLY, LIFTING THE BELT AND FASTENING IT ROUND HER WAIST."

"Guid-bye, miss," he murmured, touching his cap, and departed with his purchase.

Christina dropped the silver into the till. To herself she said: 'I doobt he's no' as green as he's cabbage-lookin'."

IV.

For some weeks Macgregor had nourished an idea of making the birthday presentation with his own hands. In fancy he had beheld his own gallant proffering of the gifts, and

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Jessie Mary's shy acceptance of the same. Why he should have foreseen himself bold and Jessie Mary bashful is a question that may be left to those who have the profound insight necessary to diagnose the delicate workings of a youthful and lovelorn imagination. At the same time he had harboured many hopeful fears and fearful hopes, but to divulge these in detail would be sacrilege.

On the Monday evening he went home by an unaccustomed though not entirely unfamiliar route. It led him past the shop wherein he had made the birthday purchases on Saturday afternoon. The window was more brightly illuminated than the majority of its neighbours; the garish contents were even more attractive than in daylight. Macgregor found himself regarding them with a half-hearted interest. Presently he noticed that one of the sliding glass panels at the back of the window was open a few inches. This aperture permitted him to see the following: A hand writing a letter on a sloping desk, a long plait of fair hair over a scarlet shoulder, and a youthful profile with an expression very much in earnest yet cheerful withal.

Macgregor could not help watching the writer, and he continued to do so for several minutes with increasingly lively interest. He was even wondering to whom the letter might be written, when the writer, having dipped her pen too deeply, made a horrid, big blot. She frowned and for an instant put out her tongue. Then, having regarded the blot for a space with a thoughtful gaze, she seized the pen and with a few deft touches transformed the blot into the semblance of a black beetle. Whereupon she smiled with such transparent delight that Macgregor smiled also.

"What are ye grinnin' at?" said a voice at his elbow.

He turned, to discover Willie Thomson. At no time in the whole course of their friendship had he felt a keener desire to hit Willie on his impudent nose.

"Naething," he muttered, shortly. "Are ye gaun hame?"

"Aye," said Willie, noting the other's discomposure, but not referring to it directly. "This isna yer usual road hame."

"Depends whaur I'm comin' frae," returned Macgregor, quickening his pace. "Hae ye got a job yet, Wullie?" he inquired, more graciously.

"I tried yin the day, but it's no' gaun to suit me. But I've earned ninepence. Hae a ceegarette." Willie produced a yellow packet.

"Na, I'm no' smokin', Wullie."

"What's wrang wi' ye?"

"Naething. What sort of job was ye tryin'?"

Willie told him, and thereafter proceeded to recount as many grievances as there had been hours in his working day. Macgregor encouraged him to enter into all sorts of detail, so that home was reached without reference to the shop-window which the thought of was somehow disturbing.

"So long," said Willie, lighting a fresh cigarette. "Maybe see ye later."

"Ah, it's likely," Macgregor replied, and turned into the close, glad to escape.

"Haud on!" cried Willie.

"What?" Macgregor halted with reluctance.

Willie sniggered. "I seen ye wi' Jessie Mary the ither nicht."

"Did ye?" retorted Macgregor, feebly.

"Aye; an' if I was you I wud let girls alane. They're nae fun, an' they're awfu' expensive."

With which sage advice Willie walked off.

Next evening Macgregor hired a small boy for the sum of one halfpenny to deliver the package to Jessie Mary at her abode, and straightway returned to the parental fireside, where he blushed at the welcome accorded him.

That night, however, fate willed it that John Robinson should run out of tobacco. Macgregor, who had been extremely restless, expressed himself ready to step down to the tobacco-shop in the main street.

Here it must be mentioned that the gifts had reached Jessie Mary at precisely the right moment. They had raised her spirits from the depths of despair to at least the lower heights of hope. Only an hour before their arrival she had learned how the young man with the exquisite moustache had deliberately invited another young lady to accompany him to the Ironmongers' dance; and, although to the ordinary mind this may appear to have been the simple result of a lack of superhuman patience on the young man's part, Jessie Mary could perceive in it nothing but the uttermost perfidy. So that until the arrival of Macgregor's present—"to J. M. from M. with best wishes" (an "l" had been scraped out where the second "w" now stood)—she had felt like tearing the pink frock to tatters and preparing for the tomb.

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They met near the tobacconist's—on Macgregor's home side, by the way—and he could not have looked more guilty had he sent her an infernal machine.

"It was awful kind o' ye," she said, sweetly; "jist *awful* kind."

"Aw, it was naething," he stammered.

was all the feverish joy, the soft rapture anticipated three nights ago? "Did ye?" —that was all he said.

She made allowance for his youth and the bashfulness she had so often experienced. "Macgreegor," she whispered, slipping her hand through his arm in the darkness of the



"HE TURNED, TO DISCOVER WILLIE THOMSON."

"They're jist lovely, an' that fashionable," she went on, and gradually led the conversation to the subject of the United Ironmongers' dance.

"Ye should come," she said, "an' see hoo nice I look wi' them on. The belt'll be lovely wi' ma pink frock. An' the combs was surely made for black hair like mines. Of course I tried them on the minute I got them."

"Did ye?" murmured Macgregor. Where

street leading to her home—"Macgreegor, I believe I wud suner dance wi' you than onybody else."

Macgregor seemed to have nothing to say. The touch of her hand was pleasant, and yet he was uneasy.

"Macgreegor," she said, presently, a little breathlessly, "I'm no' heedin' aboot ony o' the chaps that wants to tak' me to the dance. If ye had a ticket——" She paused. They

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had halted in the close-mouth, as it is locally termed. "I'm sayin', Macgreegor, if ye had a ticket——" She paused again.

The boy felt foolish and wretched. "But I canna gang to the dance, Jessie Mary," he managed to say.

She leaned closer to him. "It'll be a splendid dance; at least"—she looked at him boldly—"it wud be splendid if you and me was gaun thegether."

In his wildest of wild dreams he may have thought of kissing this girl. He might have done it now—quite easily.

But he didn't—he couldn't.

"Na; I canna gang," he said. "An'—an' ma tayther'll be waitin' for his tobacco. Guid nicht."

He glanced at her with a miserable smile and departed—bolted.

And he dreamed that night of, among other queer things, a shop-window, a plait of fair hair on a scarlet shoulder, and a black beetle.

V.

"MERCY, laddie!" exclaimed Mrs. Robinson, as her son entered the kitchen, a little late for tea. "What hae ye been daein' to yer face?"

The colour induced by the question seemed almost to extinguish the hectic spot at Macgregor's left cheek-bone.

"Washin' it," he answered, shortly, taking his accustomed chair.

"Tits, Lizzie!" muttered Mr. Robinson. "Are ye for toast, Macgreegor?"



"HER SON ENTERED THE KITCHEN A LITTLE LATE FOR TEA."

"He's been shavin' his whiskers," said Jimsie. "Did ye no' ken Macgreegor's gettin' whiskers, maw?" he went on, in spite of a warning pressure from sister Jeannie. "Paw, what way dae folk get whiskers?"

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"Dear knows," returned his father, briefly. "Lizzie, can ye no' gie Macgreegor a cup o' tea?"

Lizzie lifted the cosy from the brown teapot. "Where did ye get the razor, Macgreegor?"



"He hasna got a razor, maw," said Jimsie. "He does it wi' a wee knife."

"Shurrup!" Macgregor growled, whereupon Jimsie choked and his eyes filled with tears.

"Macgreegor," said his mother, "that's no' the way to speak to yer wee brither."

"Macgreegor," said his sister, "I'll mak' ye a bit o' hot toast, if ye like."

"Aye, Jeannie," said John, quickly, "mak' him a bit o' hot toast, an' I'll look after Jimsie."

He turned the conversation to the subject of a great vessel that had been launched into the Clyde that morning.

For the first time in the course of his married life John Robinson really doubted Lizzie's discretion. It was with much diffidence, however, that he referred to the matter after Macgregor had gone out and while Jeannie was superintending Jimsie's going to bed.

"Lizzie," he began, eyeing his cold pipe, "did ye happen to notice that Macgreegor was a wee thing offended the nicht?"

Mrs. Robinson did not halt in her business of polishing a bread-plate. "Macgreegor's gettin' ower easy offended," she said, carelessly enough.

John struck a match and held it without application to his pipe until the flame scorched his hardened fingers. "Speakin' frae experience," he said, slowly, "there's twa things that a young man tak's vera serious-like. The first——"

"Wha's the young man?"

"Macgreegor. Aw, Lizzie!"

"Macgreegor's a laddie."

"He's a young man—an' fine ye ken it, wife!"

Lizzie put down the plate and took up another. "An' what does he tak' serious-like?" she inquired, coolly.

John lit his pipe in exceedingly methodical fashion. "Weel, Lizzie," he began, at last, "I jist wanted to say that when a young man's gettin' hair on his face, ye—ye shouldna notice it."

"I didna notice it."

"Weel, ye shouldna refer to it."

"It was the cut I referred to."

John sucked at his pipe and scratched his head. "That's true," he admitted. "Still, if yer sister had a wudden leg ye wudna refer to the noise on the stair. It wasna like ye to hurt Macgreegor's feelins. I hope ye're no' offended, Lizzie."

But it is to be feared that Lizzie was offended just then. She had not been the better-half for eighteen years without knowing it; she had grown to expect her easy-going husband's cheerful acquiescence in practically all she did, and to regard her acceptance of his most mild remonstrances as a sort of favour. And now he was actually giving her advice concerning her treatment of her first-born! It was too much for her pride.

She set her mouth in a hard line, threw up her head, and proceeded with her polishing.

John waited for a couple of minutes, then sighed and took up his evening paper.

Meanwhile, Macgregor was having his troubles. He contrived to dodge Willie Thomson, who nowadays seemed always to

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be where he was not wanted, but the operation involved a *détour* of nearly a quarter of a mile, in the course of which he was held up by another youth of his acquaintance. Ten minutes were wasted in listening with ill-concealed impatience to fatuous observations on the recent play of certain professional footballers, and then he continued his journey only to fall, metaphorically speaking, into the arms of Jessie Mary emerging from a shop.

"Halloa, Mac! I thought ye was deid!" was her blithe greeting, the "sausage-roll" phrase having at long last served its day. "Ye're in a hurry," she added; "but so am I, so ye can walk back to the corner wi' me."

Macgregor mumbled something to the effect that he was in no special hurry, and, possibly in order to give a touch of truth to his falsehood, turned and accompanied her.

"Ye've no' been giein' the girls a treat lately," she remarked. "I haena noticed ye floatin' aroun'. Hae ye been keepin' the hoose at nicht?"

"Whiles," he replied, and inquired, with some haste: "Hoo did ye enjoy the dance last week, Jessie?"

"Oh, dinna mention it!" she cried, with a toss of her head. "I didna gang."

"Ye didna gang to the dance?"

"If I had went, it wud hae meant bloodshed," she impressively informed him. "Ye see, there was twa chaps implorin' me to gang wi' them, an' they got that fierce aboot it that I seen it wudna hae been safe to gang wi' either. A riot in a ballroom is no' a nice thing. An' if I had went wi' a third party, it wud ha'e been as much as *his* life was worth. So I jist bided at hame."

Macgregor began, but was not allowed to complete, a sympathetic remark.

"Oh, I was glad I didna gang. The dance turned oot to be a second-rate affair entirely—no' half-a-dizzen shirt-fronts in the comp'ny. An' I believe there wasna three o' the men could dance for nuts, an' the refreshments was rotten."

They had now reached the appointed corner.

"Jist as weel ye didna gang, then," absently said Macgregor, halting.

"Come up to the close," said Jessie Mary. "I've something to show ye. Aye, it was jist as weel, as ye say. But there's a champion dance comin' off on the nineteenth o' November—the young men o' the hosiery department are gettin' it up—naething second-rate aboot *it*. Ye should come to it, Macgreegor." She touched his arm—unintentionally, perhaps. Then, cheerfully: "Weel, here we are! But wait till I let ye see something." She halted at the mouth of the close and began to unbutton her jacket.

"Ye've never seen the belt since ye gied it to me, Macgreegor. I weer it whiles in the evenin'. There ye are! It looks fine, does it no'? Maybe a wee thing wide. I could dae wi' it an inch or twa tighter. Feel."

She took his hand and slid his fingers between the metal and the white cotton blouse.

For a moment or two he fingered the belt—awkwardly, to be sure, but with as much emotion as though it were a dog's collar.

"Aye," he said, "ye're ower jimp for it." And put his hand in his pocket.

Then, indeed, it was forced on Jessie Mary that somehow her charms had failed to hold her youngest admirer. Yet she carried it off fairly well.

"Ye're no' the first to tell me I've an extra sma' waist," she said, with a toss of her head. Then, as if struck by a remembrance of some duty or engagement: "But I've nae mair time to stan' gassin' wi' you. So long!" She ran briskly up the stone stair, humming a popular tune.

"So long," returned Macgregor, and resumed his interrupted journey, rather pleased than otherwise with himself. He realized, though not in so many words, that he had conducted himself in more manly fashion than ever before. It did not for a moment occur to him that he had left a big "Why?" behind him, not only in the mind of Jessie Mary, but in Willie Thomson's also.

His pilgrimage ended at the illuminated window of M. Tod's stationery and fancy goods shop. Jingling the few coppers in his pocket, he appeared to be deliberating a weighty problem of extensive purchases, while, as a matter of fact, he inwardly debated the most profitable ways of wasting a penny. While he would now gladly have given all he possessed—to wit, ninepence—to win a smile from the girl with the scarlet blouse and the ripe-corn-yellow pigtail, he was not prepared to squander more than he could help for the benefit of her employer. He was hoping and waiting for a customer to enter the shop, so that he might gain a glimpse of the interior with the opening of the door, when suddenly the lights in the window were lowered. Evidently it was near to closing time.

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Hastily deciding to " burst " the sum of one penny on the purchase of a pencil—an article for which he had more respect than use—he entered the doorway and turned the handle. He had forgotten the spring bell. When he pushed the door inwards it " struck one " — right from the shoulder, so to speak.

" Yes, sir ? " A mouse-like human being slipped from the back of the shop to the middle point of the counter. " Yes, sir ? " it repeated, with an accent on the query. The girl at the desk took no notice.

Macgregor approached. " I was wantin' a pencil," he said, in the tone of one requesting a pint of prussic acid.

" A pencil ! " exclaimed the mouse-like human being, as though she had a dim recollection of hearing of such a thing long, long ago. " A pencil ! Oh, certainly," she added, more hopefully.

" Penny or ha'penny ? " murmured the girl at the desk.

" Penny or ha'penny ? " demanded the mouse-like human being, almost pertly.

" A penny yin," said Macgregor, with an attempt at indifference.

" A penny pencil ! " The mouse-like human being assumed an expression suitable to a person who has just discovered the precise situation of the North Pole, but not the Pole itself.

" Top drawer on your left, Miss Tod," whispered the girl at the desk.

" Quite so, Christina," Miss Tod replied, with dignity. She opened the drawer, which was a deep one, peered into it, groped, and brought forth three bundles of pencils. With sudden mildness she inquired of the girl : " These ? Those ? "

" No ; them," said Christina, forgetting her grammar and grabbing the third bundle. " Wait a minute." She slipped lightly from her stool and gently edged M. Tod from the position at the counter which had been familiar to the latter for five-and-thirty years. " This," she said to Macgregor, laying the bundle in front of him, " is a special line. One dozen, price threepence." She looked over his head in a manner suggesting that it was quite immaterial to her whether he purchased the dozen or faded away on the spot.

But he had his dignity, too. Producing three pennies from two pockets, he laid them on the counter, took up the bundle of pencils, said " Thank ye " to nobody in particular, and marched out. Nor did he forget to close the door behind him.

On the way home he threw the pencils into a dark entry.

His father opened the door, smiling a welcome. " Weel, Macgreegor——"

" I'm wearied," said the boy, and passed straightway to his room and bolted the door. Jimsie was sleeping like a log and was, as usual, occupying most of the bed.

Macgregor stood at the old chest of drawers that served as dressing-table, his elbows planted thereon, his face in his hands. He *was* wearied.

But under his tired eyes lay a small oblong package with a covering of newspaper. The neatness of it made him think of his mother ; she had a way of making next to nothing look something important in a parcel.

Presently, wondering a little, he undid the paper. It contained one of his father's old razors.

Five minutes later he was enjoying a *real* shave.

VI.

In one respect Macgregor was not fortunate in his male friends. The oldest thereof, Willie Thomson, openly contemned the female sex, not omitting his aunt, with whom and on whom he lived ; the others confined their gallantries to the breezy pastimes of pushing girls off the sidewalk, bawling pleasantries after them, and guffawing largely at their own wit or the feminine repartee. The only mortals worthy of respect were sundry more or less prominent personages whose feet or fists were their fortunes. In one sense this boy was no more refined than his neighbours ; in another they were coarser than he. Remains the fact that he followed the trail alone—or thought he did.

Willie Thomson, for one, was interested. He had been interested to the extent of grinning in Macgregor's early tenderness for little Katie, and to the extent of sniggering in his friend's bashful pursuit of Jessie Mary. But now the interest was that of the boy who discovers a nest just beyond his hand and wonders what sort of eggs he will get if, somehow, he can reach it. Willie resented the recent ill-disguised attempts to avoid his company. Truth to tell, without Macgregor he was rather a lonely creature, a kind of derelict. No one really wanted him. He was not without acquaintances, shirkers like himself ; but in the congregation of loafers is no true comradeship. He began to spare Macgregor any necessity for dodging, and took to shadowing him on his solitary strolls.

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On the grey Saturday afternoon of the week rendered so eventful by his first real shave Macgregor was once more standing by the window of M. Tod's shop. He was endeavouring to prop up his courage with the recollection of the fact that a fortnight ago, at the same hour as the present, there had been no old woman behind the counter, and with the somewhat rash deduction that no old woman was there now.

He was also wondering what he could buy for a penny without making a fool of himself. Macgregor was obsessed by the memory of the pencil transaction of three nights ago. Had he but kept his head then and confined his purchase to a single pencil he might now have had a fair excuse for requiring another. At any rate, he could have met suspicion with the explanation that he had lost the first. But who would believe that he had used, or lost, a whole dozen within the brief space of three days?

A wretched position to be in, for nothing else in the world of stationery was quite so natural and easy to ask for as a pencil—unless a—— Why had he not thought of it before? A pen! Saved! He would enter boldly, as one who had every right to do so, and demand to be shown some pencils—no, pens, of course. There were many varieties of pens, he knew, even in small shops, so his selection would take time—lots of time. If only he were *sure* the old woman wasn't there!

And just then the bell rang, the door of the shop opened and closed, and the old woman herself came out. In spite of her hat, Macgregor recognized her at once. She turned her face skywards to make certain that it wasn't raining, gave a satisfied smirk, which Macgregor accepted with a fearful start, though it was intended for the window and its contents, and trotted up the street.

On the wave of relief, as it were, Macgregor was carried from the window to the entrance. Yet he had no sooner opened the door with its disconcerting note of warning than he wished he had delayed a minute or two longer. To retire, however, was out of the question. He closed the door as though he were afraid of wakening a baby and faced the counter.

The girl was there and wearing the scarlet blouse again. She smiled coldly and said calmly: "Good afternoon. Nice day after the rain."

"Aye," he said, solemnly, in response to the polite greeting, and advanced to the counter.

"Not just so disagreeable as yesterday," she added, a trifle more cordially.

"Aye—na." He glanced up and down the counter. "I—I was wantin' a pencil," he said at last.

"A *pencil?*" cried Christina; then, in a voice from which all the amazement had gone: "A pencil—oh, certainly."

Macgregor reddened, opened his mouth, and—shut it. Why should he make a bigger fool of himself by explaining that he had meant to say "a pen"? Besides (happy thought!), the pen would be an excuse for calling another time.

Christina opened the drawer and paused, pursing her lips. Her tone was casual as she said: "I hope you found the dozen you purchased lately quite satisfactory?"

"Oh, aye; they were—splendid." Macgregor blushed again.

Christina smiled as prettily as any musical comedy actress selling guinea button-holes at a charity *fête*. She said: "I must tell Miss Tod. She'll be delighted. It's a great saving, buying a dozen, isn't it?" Her hand went into the drawer. "Especially when one uses so many." Her hand came out of the drawer and laid a bundle in front of Macgregor. "Wonderful how they can do it for threepence!"

He stared at the bundle, his will fluttering like a bird under a strawberry net. Dash the pencils! But she might be offended if——

"Some shops sell those pencils at a ha'penny each, I know," she went on; "and I believe some have the neck—I mean, the cheek—to ask a penny. Would you like me to put them in paper, sir?"

Recovering from the shock of the "sir," Macgregor laid three coppers on the counter.

"Thank you," said she. "Is there anything else to-day?"

Before he could answer the door opened and an elderly man entered. At the ring of the bell Macgregor dropped the bundle; the flimsy fastening parted, and the pencils were scattered.

Christina checked an "Oh, crikey!" and turned to attend to the second customer while the first collected his purchases from the floor and laid them on he counter.

The elderly man wanted a newspaper only, but, thanks to Christina's politeness over the transaction, he went out feeling as if he had done quite a stroke of business.

"Accidents will happen," she remarked, cheerfully. "If they didn't, there would be mighty little happening."

She began to make a parcel, then halted in

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the operation. "Are you sure there's nothing else to-day, sir?"

Macgregor didn't want to go just yet, so he appeared to be thinking deeply.

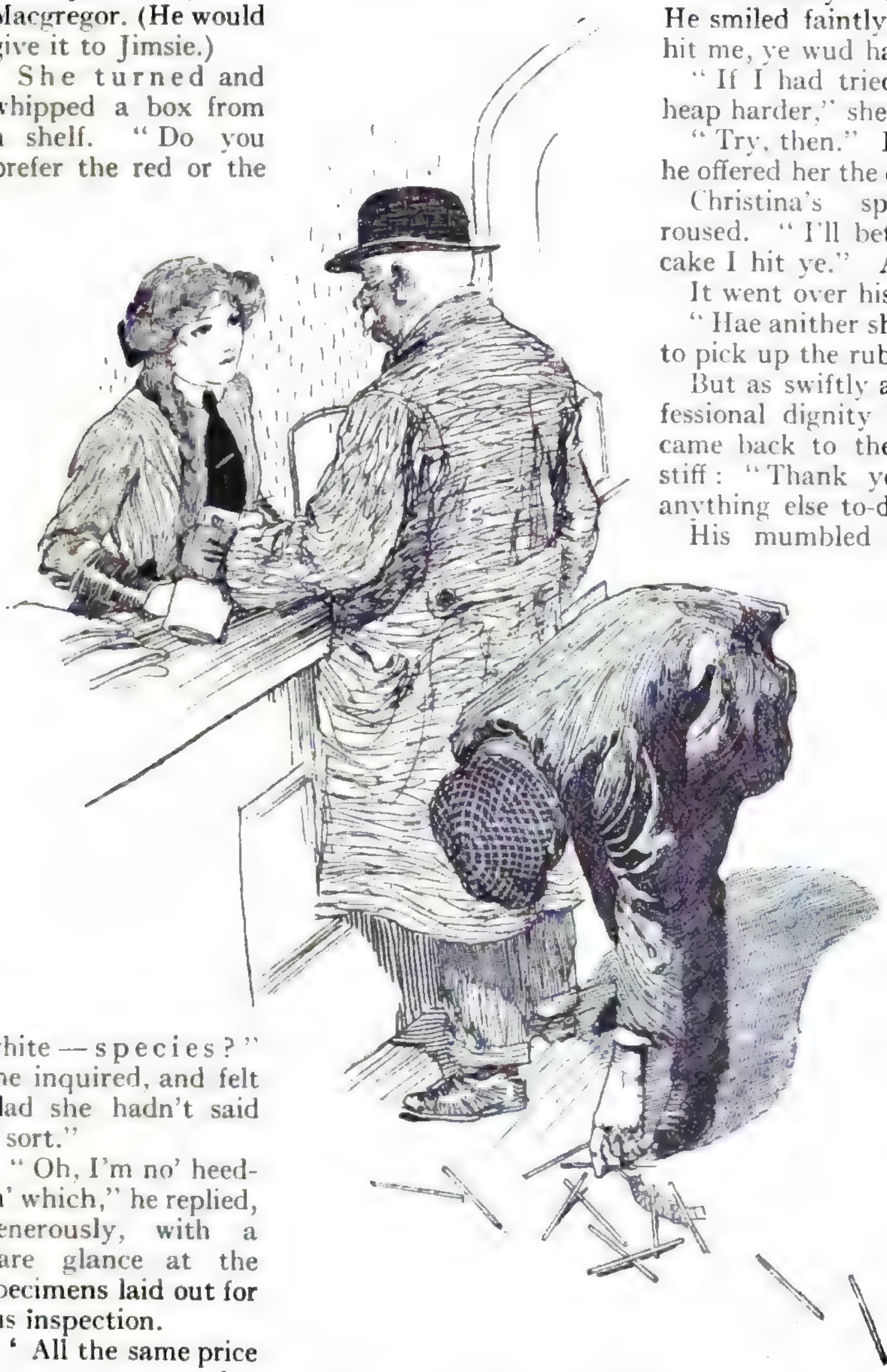
"Essay paper—notebooks," she murmured —"notepaper—envelopes—indiarubber——"

"Injinrubber," said Macgregor. (He would give it to Jimsie.)

She turned and whipped a box from a shelf. "Do you prefer the red or the white—species?" she inquired, and felt glad she hadn't said "sort."

"Oh, I'm no' heedin' which," he replied, generously, with a bare glance at the specimens laid out for his inspection.

"All the same price—one penny per cake. The red is more flexible." By way of exhibiting its quality, she took the oblong lengthwise between her finger and thumb and squeezed. To her dismay it sprang from her grip and struck the customer on the chin.



"THE FLIMSY FASTENING PARTED, AND THE PENCILS WERE SCATTERED."

"Oh, mercy!" she exclaimed. "I didna mean——"

Recovering the missile from the floor, he said, gravely: "My! ye're a comic!"

"I'm not! I tell ye I didna mean it. Did it hurt ye?"

"No' likely! I ken ye didna try it." He smiled faintly. "If ye had tried to hit me, ye wud hae missed me."

"If I had tried I wud hae hit ye a heap harder," she said, indignantly.

"Try, then." His smile broadened as he offered her the cake. "I'll stan' still."

Christina's sporting instinct was roused. "I'll bet ye the price o' the cake I hit ye." And let fly.

It went over his left shoulder.

"Hae anither shot," he said, stooping to pick up the rubber.

But as swiftly as it had gone her professional dignity returned. Macgregor came back to the counter to receive a stiff: "Thank you. Do you require anything else to-day?"

His mumbled negative, his disappointed countenance, reproached her.

"Of course," she said, pleasantly, as she put his purchases in paper, "I cannot charge you for the indiarubber."

"Aw, cheese it!" he muttered, shortly, flinging a penny on the counter.

"I beg your pardon?"—this with supreme haughtiness.

"Oh, ye needna. An' ye can keep yer injinrubber—an' yer pencils forbye!" With these words he wheeled about and strode for the door.

Christina collapsed. A customer who paid for goods and then practically threw them at her was beyond her experience and comprehension.

At the door he regarded her half angrily, half reproachfully. He wanted to say something very cutting, but it wouldn't come.

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"Please," said Christina, softly, dropping her eyes. "Ye'll get me into trouble if ye dinna tak' them."

"Eh?"

"Miss Tod wud be vexed wi' me for lossin' a guid customer. She wud gie me the sack, maybe."

"Wud she?—the auld besom!" cried Macgregor, retracing his steps.

"Oh, whisht! She's no' an auld besom. But I ken she wud be vexed." Christina sighed. "I suppose I'm to blame for——"

"It's me that's to blame," he interrupted. "Here," he said, in an unsteady whisper, "will ye shake han's?"

After a momentary hesitation she gave him her hand, saying, graciously: "I've no objections, I'm sure. To tell the truth," she went on, "I am not entirely disinterested in you, sir."

Macgregor withdrew his empty hand. "I—I wish ye wudna speak like that," he sighed.

"Like what?"

"That awfu' genteel talk."

"Sorry," she said. "But it gangs doon wi' maist o' the customers. Besides, I try to keep it up to please ma aunt. But it doesna soun' frien'ly-like, does it?"

"That's why I dinna like it," he ventured.

"I see. But if ye was servin' in a shop ye wud hae to speak the same way."

"I'm in the pentin' trade," he informed her, with an air of importance.

"I've a nose—but I like the smell fine. Ye're no' offended, are ye?"

"I'm no' that easy offended. Is Miss Tod yer aunt?"

"Na, na; she's nae relation. Ma aunt is Mrs. James Baldwin." In the frankest fashion she gave a brief sketch of her position on the world's surface. While she spoke she seated herself on the stool, and Macgregor, without thinking about it, subsided upon the chair and leant his arm upon the counter. Ere she ended they were regarding each other almost familiarly.

Anon Macgregor furnished a small account of himself and his near relatives.

"That's queer!" commented Christina, when he had finished.

"What?" he asked, anxiously.

"Ma Uncle James is a great frien' o' your Uncle Purdie. Your uncle buys a heap o' fancy things frae mine, an' he's often been in oor hoose. I hear he's worth a terrible heap o' money, but naebody wud think it. I like him fine."

"Ye wudna like ma aunt fine," said Macgregor.

"No' bein' acquaint wi' her, I canna say," Christina returned. "But I believe if it hadna been for her yer uncle wud never hae made his fortune at the grocery trade——"

"Her! What had she got to dae wi' 't?"

"Dear knows; but Uncle James says she egged him on to mak' money frae the day she married him. But mony a woman does that. I wud dae it masel'—no' that I'm greedy; I jist couldna endure a man that didna get on. I hate a stick-in-the-mud. Ye should keep in wi' yer Uncle Purdie."

Macgregor scarcely heard her latter words. His Aunt Purdie responsible for his Uncle Purdie's tremendous success in business! The idea was almost shocking. From his earliest boyhood it had been a sort of religion with him to admire his uncle and despise his aunt. Could any good thing come out of Aunt Purdie?

"I doobt yer Uncle James doesna ken *her* extra weel," he said, at last.

"Oh, ma uncle's a splendid judge o' character," she assured him. "Especially female character," she added. "That's why he married ma aunt an' adopted me. I took his name, like ma aunt did when she married him. It was a love match, in spite o' their ages. But never heed aboot that the noo. D'ye ken what astonishes me aboot yersel'?"

"What?" asked Macgregor, startled.

"That ye're no' in the grocery trade."

"Me! What for wud I be a grocer?"

"What for are ye a penter? An' yer Uncle Purdie has nae offspring. My! if I had had a chance like you!" She heaved a sigh. "I'm sure yer uncle wud hae ta'en ye into his business. Ye canna be sae stupid that he wudna gie ye even a trial. Nae offence intended."

"I could hae been in the business if I had wanted," Macgregor replied, with some dignity. "He offered me a job when I left the schule. But, ye see, I aye had the notion to be a penter."

"An' what did yer parents say?"

"They canna thole Aunt Purdie. It was her that brought the message frae ma uncle—as if it was a favour. They said I was to choose for masel'."

"Pride's an awfu' thing for costin' folk cash," she remarked, with a shake of her head.

"Eh?"

"Naething," she replied. After a slight pause she continued: "It's no' for me to speak aboot yer parents, but I hope ye'll excuse me sayin' that ye're a bigger fool than ye look."

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"Wha—what d'ye mean?"

"I dinna mean to insult ye or hurt yer feelin's." Another pause. "D'ye no' want to get up in the world, man? D'ye no' want to be a millionaire—or a thousandaire, onyway?"

"Me?"

"Aye, you!"

Across the counter he regarded her in a semi-dazed fashion, speechless. She was rather flushed; her eyes danced with eagerness. Apparently she was all in earnest.

"Are ye gaun to be a penter a' yer life?" she demanded.

"What for no'?" he retorted, with some spirit. "It's guid pay."

"Guid pay! In ten year what'll ye be earnin'?"

"I couldna say. Maybe—maybe twenty-five shillins; maybe——"

"A week?"

"Aye, of course," he said, nettled. "D'ye think I meant a month?"

"If ye was wi' yer uncle an' stickin' to yer business, I wud hae said 'a day.' Ma gracious goodness! If ye was pleasin' a man like that, there's nae sayin' where ye wud be in ten year."

"Ach," he said, with an attempt at lightness, "I'm no' heedin'."

Christina smote the counter with such violence that he fairly jumped on his seat.

"Ye're no' heedin'? What's the use o' bein' alive if ye're no' heedin'? But ye're a' the same, you young workin' men. Yer rule is to dae the least ye can for yer wages, an' never snap at an opportunity. An' when ye get aulder ye gang on strike an' gas aboot yer rights, but ye keep dumb enough aboot yer deserts, an'——"

"Here, haud on!" cried Macgregor, now thoroughly roused. "What dae *you* ken aboot it? Ye're jist a lassie——"

"I've eyes an' ears."

There was a pause.

"Are ye a—a suffragist?" he asked, weakly.

"I haena quite decided on that pint. Are *you* in favour o' votes for females? Aweel, there's nae use answerin', for ye've never thought aboot it. I suppose, like the ither young men aboot here, ye buy yer brains every Seturday done up in the sports edition o' the evenin' paper. Oh, Christopher Columbus! That's when *I* get busy on a Seturday nicht. Footba' footba'—footba'!"

Macgregor swallowed these remarks and reverted to the previous question. "What," he inquired, a little loftily, "dae *you* expec' to be earnin' ten year frae the noo?"

Promptly, frankly, she replied: "If I'm no' drawin' thirty shillins a week I'll consider masel' a bad egg. Of course, it a' depends on whether I select to remain single or itherwise."

This was too much for Macgregor. He surveyed her with such blank bewilderment that she burst out laughing.

He went red to the roots of his hair—or at any rate to the edge of his hat. "Oh, I kent fine ye was coddin' me," he said, crossly, looking hurt and getting to his feet.

She stopped laughing at once. "That's the worst o' talkin' plain sense nooadays; folk think ye're only coddin'," she observed, good-humouredly. "I'm sorry I vexed ye." Impulsively she held out her hand. "I doobt we'll hae to shake again."

This, also, was too much for Macgregor. He seized her fingers in a grip that made her squeal.

And just then bang went the door-bell.

Christina bit her lip and smiled through her tears as M. Tod entered the shop.

"Anything else to-day?" she inquired, in her politest voice, and pushed the little parcel under Macgregor's hand.

His reply was inaudible. His hand closed automatically on his purchase, his eyes met hers for the fraction of a second, and then he practically bolted.

"Young men are aye in sich a great hurry nooadays," remarked M. Tod, beginning to remove her gloves.

"He's the young man that bought the dizzen pencils the ither nicht," Christina explained, examining the joints of her right hand. "I've just been sellin' him anither dizzen."

"Dearie me! He *must* be a reporter on yin of the papers."

"He's a whale for pencils, whatever he is," Christina returned, putting straight the piles of periodicals that adorned the counter. "It's a bit o' a mystery aboot the pencils."

"A mystery!" exclaimed M. Tod, who was just about to blow into a glove.

Christina picked the neglected penny from the counter and dropped it into the till. "It's a case o' *cherchez la femme*," she said, softly, with quite a passable accent.

"What's that?" murmured M. Tod.

"French," sighed Christina, making a jotting of her last sales, and taking a long time to do it.

M. Tod stared for a moment or two, shook her head, drew a long breath, and with the same inflated her glove.

(*To be concluded next month.*)

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For the Cause.

By RICHARD MARSH.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

MOTHER got herself locked up. It was most awkward. Especially as some people were coming to dinner about whose entertainment father seemed a little anxious. I had no idea of what had happened until father had returned from the City. When he came in he asked where mother was. I told him I did not know. He looked at me with one of those looks which I sometimes feel mean a great deal more than he would care to put into words, but if he was suggesting that I was telling him a story I was not. At that time I did not know where mother was, but I did very soon afterwards.

I was dressing. I had got as far as the frock, and was hesitating whether to wear the black merve or the blue chiffon, when someone knocked at my bedroom door, and Eliza put her head in.

"Mrs. Parker wishes to see you, miss."

I felt all at once a sudden inward sinking. It is all very well to talk of martyrdom, and nothing could be nobler, but—all day long I had also been thinking of George. I knew Mrs. Parker, and Eliza knew Mrs. Parker. Eliza had been with us for years and years. I happened to know that she was thirty-six. On the great question she was what we all called half-hearted.

"I don't see," she was fond of saying, "why I shouldn't have the vote as well as that there Jarrett." Jarrett was the gardener. "I know as much about politics as he does, seeing that he knows nothing about anything at all. I want equal marriage rights for women, that's what I want."

Directly Eliza told me that Mrs. Parker wished to see me, I felt that there was bad news. When I went down to Mrs. Parker in the little sitting-room, she beamed at me as if the world was full of gladness, but I noticed that her hat was a little on one side of her head, that there was the beginning of a bruise on her left cheek, and that her clothes generally looked as though they had got a little out of their proper places since she had put them on.

"My dear Miss Pilbeam," she exclaimed, directly she saw me, "I bring you great tidings."

"Where is mother?" I sat down, as I asked her, because I felt I had to.

"Dear Mrs. Pilbeam is in Bow Street police station. She's got herself locked up. This is a great day for her, and a proud one for you."

Mrs. Parker smiled more than ever. But I did not feel like smiling. I thought of the people who were coming to dinner, and of what father would say, and—I thought of a good many things.

"What have they locked her up for?"

"It's not easy to find out. There's a great deal of excitement in Bow Street, and the police are not very civil. One policeman did this." She touched the bruise on her cheek. "He said he did it with his elbow, and he pretended to apologize—but I know better. Because another dastard, immediately after, threw me—positively threw me—out into the street."

That explained the condition of her attire. Somehow that sinking feeling became stronger.

"Did you—see mother?"

"No, I can't say that, exactly. But, though I did not see her, I gathered from what I was told that she had broken the window of a tobacconist's shop in the Strand—one of those large curved windows. But a lady, who was a stranger to me, and whose name I did not know, told me that Mrs. Pilbeam had been also recognized by a policeman as a person whom he had seen the other night breaking a fire-alarm. If that is so, dear Mrs. Pilbeam is, indeed, in a fortunate position. She'll be sent to prison without being offered the degrading option of a fine. I congratulate you. And you did not manage to get locked up? That is odd. What window did you break?"

I had not broken any window. I had

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gone out intending to break one. I meant to choose the very smallest I could find. But I walked on and on, through miles of streets, without finding one which suited me. I wished mother had had the same ill-fortune. I don't think I ever felt so miserable before, not even when I quarrelled with George, or rather, when George quarrelled with me.

"I don't know what I shall say to father." I told Mrs. Parker.

"Tell him the truth—the glorious truth!"

"It will break his heart."

"A great man once said that to make omelettes you must break eggs. Great revolutions are not brought about without breaking hearts."

It was all very well for her to talk like that, but I noticed that she had not got herself locked up, though her hat was all on one side and her clothes anyhow. When I had got rid of her, which I did as soon as ever I could, Eliza came to me in the hall. She asked me in a whisper:—

"Where is Mrs. Pilbeam, miss?"

"Eliza, mother's got herself locked up."

"Oh, dear, goodness gracious me, whatever shall we do?"

I could not tell her. Father's voice came to me over the banisters.

"Adelaide, is that your mother?"

"No, father."

"Who was it, then?"

"It was Mrs. Parker."

"What was that woman doing here? Adelaide, come up here."



"HE SAT DOWN ON A CHAIR SUDDENLY AS IF HE HAD NOT MEANT TO."

I went up there in my dressing-gown. Father was in his shirt and trousers. He had a white tie in his hand. He never can tie a bow properly unless someone helps him. He took me into his dressing-room.

"Adelaide, where is your mother?"

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"Oh, father!" I know it was not heroic, but I hid my face against the door, and I cried. Father was behind; I felt his eyes going right through me.

"Adelaide, tell me where your mother is."

He said it in such a tone that I felt that I had to tell him. Besides, he would have to be told some time.

"Father, mother has got herself locked up."

He looked at me, and he said nothing. He sat down on a chair suddenly as if he had not meant to, and such an expression came on his face that I felt as if I had been guilty of a crime for which he was being punished. Those were the most trying moments I have ever known. I could not speak, and apparently he could not. All we could do was just to keep still.

There was the sound of a ring and a knock at the street door. Father heard. He looked up, and he said:—

"Is that the Bissetts?" He glanced at the clock which he kept on a shelf. "It wants a quarter to eight. The Bissetts are always early."

Somehow it seemed so dreadful that he should talk like that at such a moment, that I felt worse than ever. Mr. Bissett was a business friend of father's—I believe a very good friend—but mother did not like him or Mrs. Bissett. Their views did not agree. And the fact that George was in Mr. Bissett's office made it very difficult for me.

Presently father got up from his chair with a perceptible effort, and he said:—

"Adelaide, do you mind tying my bow?"

That brought me to with a start. I do not tie dress-ties so well as mother does, but I did it as well as I could. Eliza came while I was doing it, and told us that Mr. and Mrs. Bissett had arrived.

"Be as quick as you can," said father, "and be civil to them—if you don't object to being civil to my guests."

He knew I didn't. Another time I would have told him so, but there was something about him then which made it clear to me that he wanted to have as little said to him as possible. Just as I was going out of the room he said:—

"By the way, where's Bella?"

Though I had been expecting the question, I did not know what to answer. He saw my hesitation.

"What's the matter with her? She hasn't got herself locked up?"

"No, father."

"Then where is she? In the house?"

"She and mother had a few words this morning. When mother said that she was going out to—to break windows, Bella said that if she did she would go out of the house and never come back to it again."

"She ought not to have used such language to your mother."

"No, father, but she did. There—there was a scene."

"So I should imagine. Then what happened?"

"Mother said things to Bella, and Bella said things to mother."

"You may leave out that part. In this house we're used to that kind of thing. I asked you what happened—when the talk was over?"

"Bella went upstairs and packed a bag, and went out of the house."

"Then I suppose your mother went crusading for the cause? Did you go out with her and break windows?"

"I went, father, but I didn't dare."

"You showed the best kind of courage, young woman. You have glimmerings of sense in you somewhere. But I suppose it would be no good my begging you not to be a fool, because your mother would be against me. Do you mind hurrying down to see the Bissetts?"

I turned to leave the room, then I stopped.

"Father, what are you going to do about mother?"

"About mother? What do you mean?"

"Mrs. Parker says she's at Bow Street police-station."

"My dear Adelaide, your mother's a woman of ripened years. She's at liberty to choose her own quarters. I'm not entitled to interfere because she chooses a police-station."

"But, father, aren't you going to do anything?"

"Certainly not. Who am I that I should dare to interfere with the liberty of action of a woman of forty-seven? I know your mother says she's only forty-six, but she's mistaken. Will you go down and see the Bissetts?"

I went. I have not the least idea how I looked. I don't think I ever dresssd quicker in my life. I scarcely glanced at a looking-glass. When I got downstairs there was Mrs. Bissett, sitting with her hands crossed in front of her, looking as if she had just wakened from a doze, and Mr. Bissett was standing in front of the fire.

"I am so sorry," I explained, "to have left you alone like this. Father says he will

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be down in a moment. But we have had rather an agitated time."

"Is Mrs. Pilbeam not well?" Mrs. Bissett asked the question as she offered me a fish-like hand.

"I—I think she's fairly well, thank you."

"You think, my dear? Your own mother—don't you know?"

"She was quite well when I saw her last."

"When you saw her last? Is not Mrs. Pilbeam upstairs?"

"No, she's not upstairs."

Mrs. Bissett glanced at her husband.

"Does not Mrs. Pilbeam expect us?"

"She—she knew that you were coming."

"Your manner is very strange, my dear. Where is your mother?"

"She's at Bow Street police-station."

"Where?"

"She's got herself locked up."

Mrs. Bissett rose from her seat. She is very large; considering how large, she got out of that armchair quite quickly. When she was up she drew a great breath like a gasp, she looked at me, and she looked at her husband.

"Augustus, do you hear? Mrs. Pilbeam, our hostess—as her daughter rather oddly puts it—has got herself locked up."

Mr. Bissett, who was a smallish man, put his hands into his trousers pockets, got up on to his toes, and went back on to his heels.

"So—no offence, Miss Adelaide—your mother has done something besides talk at last."

His wife looked shocked.

"Augustus, don't talk like that. Remember the relationship between Mrs. Pilbeam and this poor child."

"You did not get yourself locked up?" Mr. Bissett, ignoring his wife, made this remark to me. The way he said it put my back up.

"I meant to."

"My dear Adelaide!"

This was his wife.

"But you didn't see a window big enough—or hadn't you a stone, or a brick, or whatever it is they do it with?"

This was her husband.

"It was the other way about. I couldn't find one small enough. It's not the size of the window I care about; it's the principle."

"Hear, hear!"

"Augustus, will you oblige me by desisting? I suppose, my dear, that in the circumstances we ought not to stop, and we won't. Augustus, we had better go, though it is rather unfortunate, since I have let our cook go out, and I don't know what we shall do about dinner."

"Dinner is waiting for you here, Mrs. Bissett. It is not yet quite eight."

"Has your father gone to see your mother?"

This was Mr. Bissett.

"No."

"Ah! When is he going?"

"He'll be down in a minute, and then you'll be able to ask him. I hope, Mrs. Bissett, that you will not think of going away without dinner, just because mother is suffering for the cause."

She looked at me in an odd way. Indeed, they both looked at me in an odd way. Then she said:—

"I thought, when a hostess asked you to dinner, and then made elaborate preparations not to be present when you came to dinner, that sometimes that sort of thing was intended for a hint."

"Father asked you, Mrs. Bissett, not mother."

"Adelaide!"

"Father told me to ask you in mother's name. You know what I mean."

"I do not know what you mean. Augustus, this seems to be very ambiguous."

"If Miss Adelaide will give us something to eat, I'll overlook the ambiguity. Is your father going to honour us with his company at his own table?"

"I expect this is father."

Someone opened the door in rather a hurry, and came into the room at what was almost a run. It was not father; it was Mr. Hobden. He seemed to be in a state of considerable agitation, and stood staring round the room like a sort of masculine equivalent for a startled hen. When he saw me he came fluttering forward.

"Miss Pilbeam, your mother is a wicked woman!"

"Mr. Hobden!"

His remark was so surprising that, for the moment, that was all I could say.

"If I had my way there'd be a lethal chamber for such women as your mother. She'd be treated as they do dangerous dogs which are found in the streets."

"Mr. Hobden!"

I have seldom seen a man in a greater fluster—and he is such a little man.

"Yes, I say there would! There would, Mrs. Bissett! Yes, Bissett, there would! Women like your mother, Miss Pilbeam, are

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dangers to society. Owing to your mother's influence, Miss Pilbeam, Mrs. Hobden has fallen into the hands of the police."

At that moment father came into the room. Mr. Hobden assailed him.

"Pilbeam, that woman whom you call your wife has been haunting my house like a fatal shadow. In the hands of such a firebrand as Mrs. Pilbeam my poor wife is as weak as water. In which metropolitan police-station she is incarcerated at this moment I don't know, but she's in one of them. That's your wife, sir—that's your wife!"

He actually waved his top-hat in father's face.

We had a terrible business with Mr. Hobden. Finally father had to take him into his study and have it out with him there. Before they went Mr. Blake arrived, and his sister Janet. As father was leaving the room with Mr. Hobden he whispered to me:—

"Don't wait. I'll get rid of Hobden as soon as I can. Let these people have their food."

As soon as father was out of the room Mrs. Bissett asked, with what I call one of her malicious smiles:—

"What time did you say dinner was, Adelaide?" and she glanced at the clock. Mr. Bissett looked at his watch.

"I think we'd better go and get a chop somewhere. Pilbeam's domestic arrangements seem to be a little disorganized." This is what he said.

"Has anything serious happened?" inquired Miss Blake, in a sort of funereal whisper.

Before Mrs. Bissett could reply I rang the bell.

"Is dinner ready?" I asked Eliza, who appeared in the doorway.

"Dinner's been waiting this ever so long, miss, only cook didn't quite know whether the master was ready."

"We are quite ready, Eliza."

"It seems rather odd," observed Mrs. Bissett, as we were taking our places at table, "to sit down to dinner with neither the host nor the hostess present."

"Is Mrs. Pilbeam ill?" asked Miss Blake.

"So far as I know she is quite well."

"Is she absent?"

I did not want to have to explain the situation to each person individually, but obviously I could not leave sandy-haired Janet—I can't bear Janet Blake—under an entirely wrong impression, so I had to tell the story all over again. The Blakes were like living figures of exclamation. Janet was positively trembling. Her brother was so amazed that he did not notice the plate of soup which Eliza placed in front of him. When Eliza, perceiving the impression made upon the party, hurried out of the room with a handkerchief to her eyes, it was almost more than I could stand. Whatever they might pretend at the beginning, before they had been talking very long, they seemed to have forgotten that the person they were discussing was my mother. I could do nothing to stop them. We were halfway through the meal—such a meal as it was—before father appeared. Almost as soon as he had taken his seat I stood up.

"I am afraid, father, you must excuse me. I—I'm not feeling very well."

"You don't look it," he said. Then he added, "It may interest you to know that I should not be surprised if Hobden commits suicide before the night's over."

That was a nice thing for him to say, in the presence of those four people! If I had not rushed out of the room I should have had to put my handkerchief to my eyes like Eliza. I went up to my bedroom and I tried to think. But I had not yet even connected my thoughts when a strange noise so startled me that I almost jumped out of my chair. I could not imagine what it was. It came again, then I guessed.

"I believe," I told myself, "someone is throwing stones at the window."

I drew the blind aside, but I could see nothing. Then I slightly raised the window.

"Is anyone there?" I asked. I did not speak very loudly, yet that my question was heard an answering voice made clear.

"Addy, it's me."

The reply was sobbed rather than spoken. For a moment I could not think who it was—the voice did sound so odd; then on a sudden it came to me.

"Why, Louisa," I asked, "is that you?"

Then a perfect wail came back.

"Of course, it's me—you know it's me. Addy, for goodness' gracious sake, don't speak loudly."

Considering that the last request was uttered in a positive howl, it did not seem to matter much in what tone I spoke. My bedroom is on the second floor, at the back, overlooking the not very large piece of ground we call the garden. It was dark; I could see nothing, but I heard a sound as of shuffling feet. I guessed that Louisa Twynham was trying to get as close to me as she could. I could also hear that she was trying to get the better of her sobs. Then her shaky tones came up to me.

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"Adelaide, I must either come in to you, or you must come out to me."

"I'll come down and open the front door if you'll go round."

"I daren't. Do you think I should be here if I dare? I got over the wall at the end."

"Louisa, whatever for?"

At the back of our garden is a common. The idea of Louisa Twynham stealing across the common in the darkness, and then struggling to climb over our wall, struck me as so comical that I very nearly smiled.

"Come down to me," she cried. "Oh, do come down! I daren't come into the house."

I slipped on a big coat, and down I went, sneaking to the front door, round the side of the house to the garden at the back. Directly I got there someone shrieked. It was Louisa.

"What's the matter with you?" I asked. "What did you do that for?"

"Oh!" she gasped, "I thought it was the police."

"The police?" I was standing close to her. She was clinging with both hands to my right arm. I could feel her trembling. "How could you possibly mistake me for the police?"

"I've got to that state I could mistake anything for the police. They seem to be all round me; I can see a policeman in every shadow. I've been running away from them for hours."

"Louisa!"

"It's perfectly true; they've been chasing me all over London."

"Have you——" I did not finish my whispered question, but she understood. She clung tighter, and shook so that I wondered if it were possible for her to shake herself to pieces. Her intention, perhaps, was to speak in a whisper which would be audible to me alone, but her emotion was so strong that I believe you could have heard what she said three gardens off.

"I have—I've broken two."

"Two windows?"

"And I hit a policeman."

"Louisa!"

"I never meant to. I really didn't mean to break even one, but when Clara Mooney said, 'Don't be a craven,' with the iron end of my stick I hit the window, and I was so frightened by the crack it made—it went all to splinters—that in jumping right round I hit another, and that went with a more awful crash than the first. I had brought out my brother's heavy alpenstock. I had no idea that it would break big plate-glass windows like it did. People came running out of the shop, people came from all directions, and there was a policeman standing right in front of me, and he put out his hand as if to take me by the shoulder, so that, without the least meaning to do it, I gave him one on the nose. I hit him so hard, Adelaide, that I hurt my knuckles. They're positively sore."

She held out her hand, as if I could see her knuckles in that light.

"I suppose you didn't hurt him?"

"I think I must have done, though I didn't stop to see. I had an idea that he made a grab at me, but I simply flew."

"Did no one try to stop you?"

"I believe the people stood aside to let me pass. Oh, Adelaide, I never ran so fast in my life—and I had on my tightest skirt."

"You couldn't have run fast in that."

"I pulled it up to my knees."

"You must have created a sensation."

"I didn't care. I ran, and ran, and ran."

"How far did you really run?"

"Till I got into a taxi-cab. I think it must have been standing close to the kerb, because I was inside before I ever meant to be. And I said to the driver, 'Drive me anywhere,' and he drove me."

"What was his idea of anywhere?"

"At last he stopped, and he asked me how much farther I wanted to go, and I said, 'Where are we now?' and he said, 'This is High Street, Wapping.' And I said, 'Where's that?' And he said, 'You told me to drive you anywhere, and I've done it. My fare is sixteen and fourpence.' I gave him a sovereign, and he said, 'Do you want any change?' and before I could answer he said, 'There's a policeman down the street. I've an idea that some of his friends are looking for you.' So I said, 'Drive me somewhere else,' and he drove me."

"It sounds, Louisa, as if you were a little insane."

"I was frightfully insane. Oh, don't ask me any questions, Adelaide; I simply couldn't bear it." I had no intention of doing anything of the kind, and there was no necessity for her to get excited. On she went. "I came across the common, and I caught my foot in something, and I came down such a cracker, and I believe I've broken my nose. And I couldn't get over the wall. Oh, do have a little sympathy for me, Adelaide. No matter what I've done, I do not deserve all I've had to suffer."

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"Have you been home?"

"I daren't. The police are probably looking for me all over the house."

"Do they know your address?"

"I don't see how they can. But, all the same, I dare not go home. Suppose a policeman is waiting for me on the doorstep?"

as I raised my hand to ring. "Oh, Adelaide, I daren't come into the house. Suppose your father opens the door?"

"Father doesn't generally open the door. Besides, he has friends to dinner."

"Friends to dinner, and you ask me to come into the house?"



"I NEVER RAN SO FAST IN MY LIFE—AND I HAD ON MY TIGHTEST SKIRT."

"You'd better come indoors. I'll take you up to my room. What you want is rest and quiet."

"Oh, I do."

I tried the back door, and that was locked. Then I took her round to the front door, and that was shut.

"What are you going to do?" she asked,

Before she could finish Eliza opened the door. Louisa tried to dart away, but I held on. I pushed her through the door. When Eliza saw Louisa her face was eloquent.

"If it isn't Miss Twynham!" she exclaimed. "My goodness! whatever have you been doing to yourself, miss?"

I answered, "Miss Twynham's all right,

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Eliza. Are they still in the dining-room?" Eliza nodded. "Miss Twynham is tired; she wants to be quiet."

I got Louisa up the stairs somehow. She stopped on every tread, as if she thought a policeman might be just in front or just behind. When the door of a room opened, she shrieked and put her arms about my neck. Louisa Twynham had always declared to me that she did not know what nerves were. She knew then. When I got her into my bedroom she gasped: "Lock the door."

"No one will come in here, my dear Louisa, and if anyone does they won't hurt you."

"But suppose——"

"Suppose nothing." Just then someone did tap at the door. She gave a shriek, and before I could stop her she rushed across the room and dropped down on the other side of my bed. "I think," I observed, "you'll find it's Eliza bringing you something to eat and drink."

It was Eliza, with a tray.

"Where's Miss Twynham?" she asked, when she perceived that, so far as she could see, the room was empty. I gave her what I meant to be a significant glance. I don't know if she understood, but she put down the tray and went softly out. She could hardly have helped seeing that there was something unusual sticking up the other side of my bed. When the door was closed Louisa raised her head a little higher, so that all of it was visible. Her hat had come right off—I expect she had given it such a jerk as she went down on to the floor. You could see the pads through her hair. It seemed incredible that she could be Louisa Twynham. I had scarcely got her on to a chair, and induced her to try to eat and drink something, when there came another tapping. She started up so awkwardly that it was a miracle that she did not knock the table on which the tray was right over. She made another dart towards the other side of the bed, but I managed to get hold of her just in time.

"Louisa, don't be an idiot! It's only Eliza."

It was Eliza—with a look on her face which I was beginning to know only too well.

"Miss Adelaide, there's Mr. Mitchell downstairs, and he wants to see you."

She spoke as if there was something terrible about my George, and I confess that I myself felt as if I were going at the knees.

"Does there—does there seem anything strange about him, Eliza?"

"Well, miss, there does. His manner's that solemn, and when I said 'Good evening, sir,' he never spoke a word. He said, most unlike himself, 'Tell Miss Adelaide that I must see her at once. You understand, at once. Is there anyone in the little room?' Without waiting for me to tell him, he walked straight to the little room, and he stopped at the door, and he said, 'Be so good, Eliza, as to go instantly to Miss Adelaide and tell her that I must see her at once.' So, miss, I've come right up to you."

"I—I'll be down with him directly, Eliza."

Eliza never was great on the side of tact, or she would not have made the remark she did.

"You're not looking very well, miss. I do hope there's not going to be more trouble. Now, don't you go and anger Mr. Mitchell."

As if I were likely to. Just then I felt like angering no one. When I got back into the room if Louisa hadn't crawled underneath the bed, and left both her feet sticking out at the side!

"Louisa," I told her, "you are the most absolute silly!" And I caught hold of one of her shoes. The shriek she gave! "I am going downstairs to see someone."

So far as I could gather, she was begging me not to leave her, but I had to.

I understood something of what Louisa felt when I reached the little room. I felt positively shaky, and I hesitated for a moment outside the door. The only thing I could say when I did go in was, "Oh, George!" and I stood with my back up against the door to say it. Usually, when first we met, and were quite alone, I would go flying into his arms and he would come rushing towards me. But nothing of that sort happened then. He stood in front of the fire, his overcoat buttoned up to his chin, a pair of thick brown gloves on, umbrella in one hand, hat in the other, and, so far as I was able to judge, even at the sight of me, he never stirred. He looked at me almost as if I were something painful. For what seemed to be an ocean of time he never spoke, and when he did he only said—very much as a parson says "Amen" in church:—

"Thank Heaven!"

I did not know what he was thanking Heaven for, until presently he went on to explain.

"I've been telephoning to all the police-stations in town to learn in which of them you were. It is some comfort to know that at present you are not in any." I did not like

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the way he said "at present"—as if a policeman might be expected to come for me at any moment.

"I am not going to be in any of them, thank you, George!"

"But your mother is!" He spoke in a tone of voice which was really funereal. All I could manage, in face of his gloom, was a silly repetition of my previously vapid remark:—

"Oh, George!"

"I have seen your mother."

I said, "Oh, George," in quite a different tone of voice, and I added, "Where is she?"

"She telephoned to me."

"Mother did?"

He fixed me with a stony sort of glance which made me feel somehow that there was more in some men than I had thought. When he looked at me like that he seemed to be the concentration of masculine strength. The way in which he repeated himself, with additions, smacked of something which was almost great.

"Your mother telephoned to me at the office. I asked, 'Who's there?' She replied, 'It's me.' I knew the voice, though she mentioned no name. She went on to say, 'I'm at Bow Street police station. There are about two hundred other women who want the telephone, so I haven't a moment to spare. Come to me at once.' The voice ceased. I do not know if she was disconnected; she certainly had not had her legal amount of time. I went."

The way in which he uttered those last two words suggested something which was nearly heroic. I do not think I was ever before so much moved.

"You went to Bow Street police station?"

"I did. A lamentable state of things I found there—mothers and wives, sisters and daughters, most of them in a whirl of agitation which beggars description. I felt for the policemen who were supposed to have them in charge. I found your mother. She was half beside herself with indignation. I found it difficult to understand what was the cause of it."

"I should think," I told him, "that being locked up in a police-station was enough to make anybody indignant."

"So far as I could judge, that did not seem to be the common opinion. Most of the women seemed to be glorying in the fact that they were there. With your mother that was not the case; she was very angry."

"Had the police used her roughly?"

"Judging from her appearance, they had probably not handled her too gently. But that was not the cause of her indignation."

"What was?"

"She was angry with Mrs. Parker."

"But, George, why? It was Mrs. Parker who came and told me she was locked up. I should never have known if it had not been for Mrs. Parker."

"And had it not been for Mrs. Parker your mother would never have been locked up. That is how I see the situation."

I thought I saw what George was aiming at, and I did my best to be just to Mrs. Parker. I always like to be fair.

"You know, George, it's all very well for mother to talk like that, and you know Mrs. Parker is an enthusiast, and she did say that every woman who was a woman ought to break a window. But then mother—well, she volunteered to break a window, and she said that if she had her way there wouldn't be a window left whole in London. And you know—mind, I'm not blaming anyone, because I'm quite old enough to take care of myself, and I can take care of myself—all the same, it was really mother who infected me with her spirit, not Mrs. Parker. You should have heard the language Bella and mother used to each other this morning."

"And have you been out breaking windows?"

My voice was all quavery.

"I did go out to break one."

"And did you break one?"

"I didn't dare. Perhaps it was because I couldn't find one small enough."

"Whatever the cause, I am thankful."

Then what he immediately added took me entirely by surprise.

"Your mother did not break any windows either; not even a little one."

I was so amazed at his saying such a thing that for some seconds I could do nothing but stare. Then I began, "But Mrs. Parker told me——"

At the moment I could not recall what exactly Mrs. Parker had told me, and before I could bring my thoughts to bear George went on.

"According to your mother, Mrs. Parker is an unspeakable thing—and a great many other things besides. Mrs. Pilbeam said, so far as I could gather, that she was walking along the Strand with Mrs. Parker when Mrs. Parker, all of a sudden, took something out of a handbag she was carrying and with it struck a shop window which they were looking at. Whether the window was broken or not

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Mrs. Pilbeam was not sure. Mrs. Parker's conduct was so extraordinary that she was not able to ascertain. Mrs. Pilbeam assures me that before she could utter a word Mrs. Parker threw her arms about her in the open street and exclaimed, almost at the top of her voice, 'Oh, Mrs. Pilbeam, what have you done? You've broken the biggest window in the whole of the Strand!'"

"You're not serious, George?"

He sounded and he looked as if he were serious, but it did seem incredible.

"I can assure you that your mother was serious enough — with an intense seriousness which I am wholly unable to imitate." I knew what he meant by "intense seriousness." I must admit that mother has a temper—as father has discovered. "She assured me that at first she thought that Mrs. Parker had all at once gone mad, but thinking it over since she had come to the



"MOTHERS AND WIVES, SISTERS AND DAUGHTERS, MOST OF THEM IN A WHIRL OF AGITATION WHICH BEGGARS DESCRIPTION."

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conclusion that Mrs. Parker regretted what she did the instant it was done, and was so overcome by a sudden consciousness of what the consequences might be that practically for the moment she did lose her senses and, yielding to a wild instinct of self-preservation, actually attributed what she had done to your mother."

"But, George, can Mrs. Parker be a thing like that?"

"Your mother says she can, and your mother says she is. When people came out of the shop, and a crowd began to collect, Mrs. Parker kept on repeating, as if she really had lost her wits, 'Oh, Mrs. Pilbeam, you've broken the biggest window in the Strand!' Mrs. Pilbeam, completely taken aback, lost her own wits, as in the circumstances it seems to me she very easily might have done, and when a policeman put his hand upon her shoulder, and said something she did not catch, she admits that she might have done something which might have been interpreted as an attempt to resist arrest. It is quite clear that she did not go quietly—or at least not so quietly as she might have done—to Bow Street police-station. Her situation appears to me to be—I will not say droll, because that might seem unfeeling—I will say peculiar. I heard her say—you know when ——" I did; it had been an awful scene. When mother told George that if she had been a man she would have dropped him out of the window I thought I had lost him for ever. "The other night, as you are aware, she told me in your presence that she would not rest easy until she had joined her sisters in captivity. I did not quite catch her meaning, because until then I had not known that she had any 'sisters in captivity,' but I had a general idea. I took it that she meant to say that she intended to get herself locked up, and would stick at nothing which would result in her being landed in a prison cell. But she proposed to get there as the result of her own action, not because of what someone else had done. The idea that she should be locked up, not because she broke a window, but because Mrs. Parker broke one—that idea did not commend itself to her at all."

"So I should think. Mrs. Parker must be a perfect cat. I always did distrust that woman. And to think of her coming here in that brazen fashion to tell me about mother getting herself locked up."

"Your mother has got herself locked up."

"But, George, don't make fun of it. Mother oughtn't to be locked up if she's innocent."

"That's a point on which I'm not quite clear."

"George!"

"I have no wish to say anything to hurt your feelings, Adelaide, but I am of opinion that your mother probably would have broken a window if Mrs. Parker had not got there first."

"But that's not justice."

I had to sit down and stare at George, it was so unlike him to talk like that.

"My sympathies, I regret to say, my dear Adelaide, are not so much with your mother as with the people who have her in charge."

"If mother hasn't done anything she ought to be let out."

"That is your opinion."

"But oughtn't she? People oughtn't to be locked up for what they haven't done!"

"Not even when they've expressed a desire to get themselves locked up?"

"You don't seem to think that mother's happy!"

"That was principally because she could not have a few words with Mrs. Parker—or at least that was the impression left upon my mind."

I had to stand up and, metaphorically, put my foot down. I felt that whatever his outward bearing might be, George was making fun of me in his heart.

"George," I asked, "can mother be got out to-night?"

"The position is rather a delicate one. She can only be got out by putting the blame of that broken window upon Mrs. Parker. I'm not sure that, in spite of Mrs. Pilbeam's indignation, she's particularly anxious to do that, and I don't see how it could be managed at a moment's notice if she were. So far as I can see, Mrs. Pilbeam will have to go before a magistrate."

"And stop in jail all night?"

"What is one night to Mrs. Pilbeam? There's only one point on which she can object, so far as I can see. I happen to know that she's fond of a good night's rest, and I don't see how she's going to get it if they keep her at Bow Street. It's possible that she and her 'sister captives' will be taken to Holloway Castle. There they may find comparative peace—that is if some of the more exuberant souls will be content to grow a little calmer."

"George, I'm going to speak to father."

Just as I opened the door of the little room the telephone bell began to ring. Our telephone is in the hall. Sometimes, when it begins to ring, everybody makes a rush for

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it. I could hear Eliza running up the kitchen stairs. As I was taking down the receiver father looked out of the drawing-room.

"Who is it?" he asked, as I was putting the receiver to my ear.

"I'll tell you, father, when I know." I replied to the call. "Yes, who is it?"

A voice came back, "Is that Mr. Pilbeam's?"

"Yes—who are you?"

"Is that you, Adelaide?" Then I knew the voice.

"Bella, is that you?"

"What's that?" asked father. "Is that Bella speaking?"

"One moment, father; I'm trying to hear what she says."

Bella's voice was very audible. Somehow it always is; she always speaks so clearly. One could tell from the quiet way in which she went on talking that she was oblivious of the fact that she was inflicting on me a series of shocks.

"I'm at Bow Street police-station. I've been bailing mother out—or rather, Frederick has been bailing her out."

Frederick Gibbs is the name of the man to whom Bella is engaged to be married.

"Frederick and I are bringing her home. I don't know what state she'll be in when we arrive. I'm telephoning to tell you not to make a fuss. Tell father to say nothing; he'd better not appear. I'm going to pack her straight off to bed. You understand?"

I did, but father wanted to understand. He was a little difficult.

"Is that Bella talking? What does she want? Give me the receiver."

"I think she's finished, father. She's bailed mother out."

"Bailed her out—Bella has?"

I was conscious that, father having left the drawing-room door open, the Bissetts and the Blakes were listening to the proceedings with every appearance of interest, and there was George standing in the doorway of the little room. In the circumstances I found it a little difficult to explain to father, especially as he was so impatient.

"Why in the name of goodness, girl, can't you speak? What do you mean by saying that Bella has bailed your mother out? A mere chit of a girl like that! Surely no policeman in this world would accept her as a surety." He stamped his foot. "Will you tell me what Bella said?"

"I'm trying to, father, if you'll let me. Bella and Frederick have bailed her out between them. I suppose it's really Frederick."

"Of course it's Frederick."

"Father, mother's done nothing."

"Done nothing? What do you mean?"

"It seems that it was Mrs. Parker who broke the window."

"Broke what window? There were more windows broken than one. Didn't your mother break a window?"

Before I could answer there came a knock at the hall door.

"Perhaps that's mother."

But it was not mother. I opened the door myself, and to my surprise there was Mrs. Parker on the step. She came striding into the hall. She seemed more excited even than she had been before.

"So it's you, Adelaide! Oh, and it's you, Mr. Pilbeam! And is that George Mitchell I see at the back there? It's just as well that you should be all here to hear me. I've come here at great inconvenience, because of a report which has just reached me. I'm told that Mrs. Pilbeam asserts that she did not break the window for which the police locked her up, but that I broke it. If Mrs. Pilbeam does say so, she is saying the thing which is not. We were both looking into a shop window—a tobacconist's shop window. All at once, without the slightest notice to me, she must have struck it with something she held in her hand."

I do not know if Mrs. Parker had finished. If not, she never did. There came the sound of a familiar voice.

"It's absolutely untrue!"

Mrs. Parker had come in with such a rush that I had omitted to close the front door. There was mother standing on the step. Mrs. Parker glared at her, as if she were not the best friend she had in the world. Quite a remarkable conversation took place between them. Mrs. Parker began.

"So you're out?"

"I never ought to have been in."

"I thought you went out to break windows with the deliberate intention of getting yourself locked up."

"That may be so, but I did not break the window. It was you who broke the window."

"I broke the window! Mary Pilbeam, how can you stand there and say so?"

Mother went strutting up to Mrs. Parker. Unfortunately, mother is rather rotund, and is apt to strut.

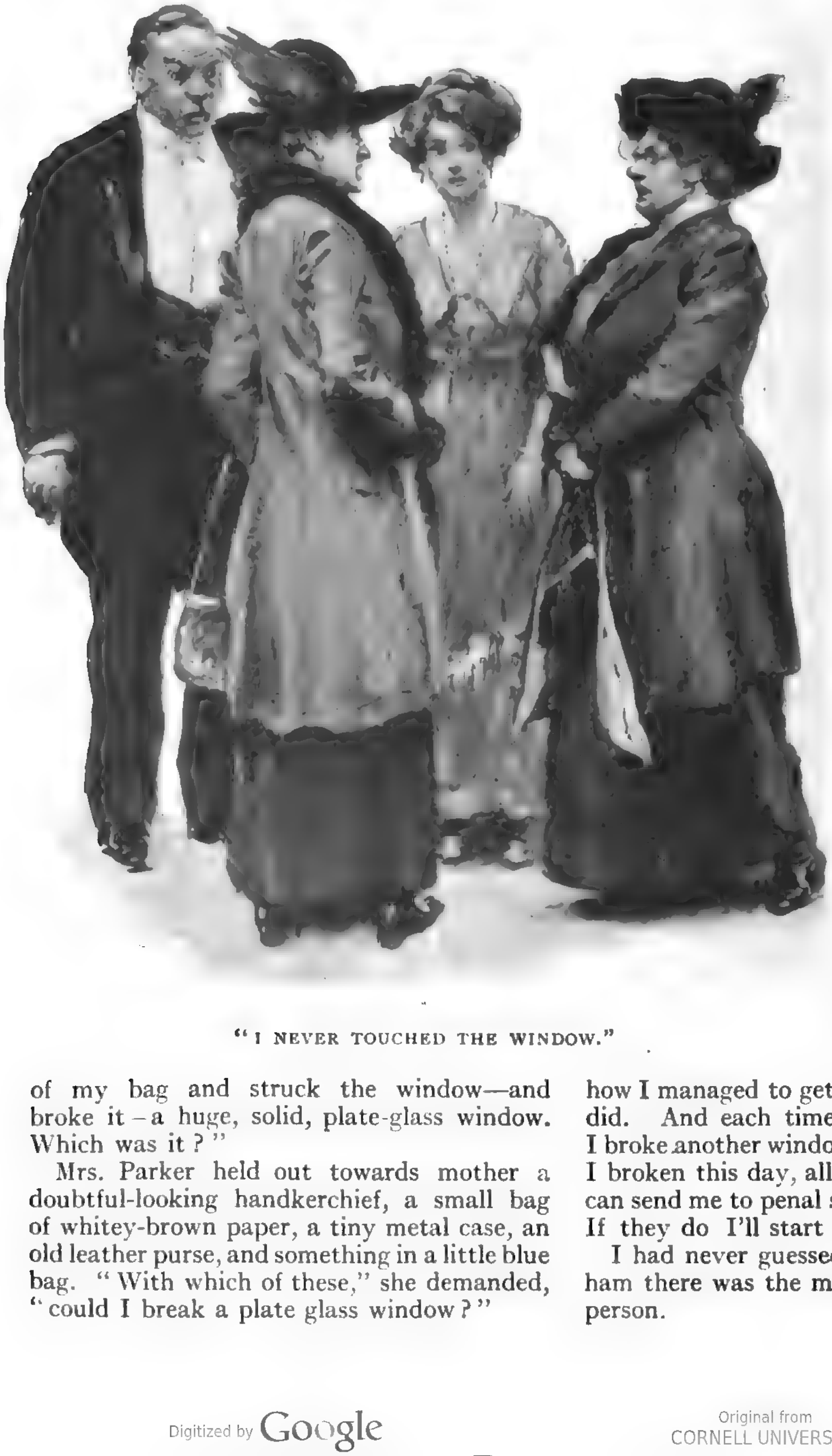
"Do you mean to tell me to my face that you didn't?"

"It's incredible that you should have the assurance to tell me to my face that I did. I never touched the window."

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"You struck it with something you took out of your bag."

"With something I had in my bag! Here is my bag." She held out the article in question. "There was nothing in it then which is not in it now. Here's my handkerchief, a packet of peppermint lozenges, a case of pins, my purse, and a powder puff. Nothing else has been in my bag the whole of this day. You say I took one of them out of my bag and struck the window—and broke it—a huge, solid, plate-glass window. Which was it?"



"I NEVER TOUCHED THE WINDOW."

Mrs. Parker held out towards mother a doubtful-looking handkerchief, a small bag of whitey-brown paper, a tiny metal case, an old leather purse, and something in a little blue bag. "With which of these," she demanded, "could I break a plate glass window?"

"If you didn't, who did?"

"You can ask me that?"

"It was I who broke the window!"

The voice which spoke came from the staircase. I did not require to look round to know whose voice it was. When I did, there was Louisa Twynham standing at the top of the first flight. While we stared, she came down them. She addressed herself to mother and Mrs. Parker. I think her remarks astonished them; I know they did us.

"I saw you both standing in front of the tobacco shop. I saw that neither of you had the courage to do what you had talked so much about. I saw that you were both on the point of sneaking away. Although you did not know it—you were in such a state of nerves that you didn't know anything—I was close behind you. I threw a bullet which went right between you, and it was that which broke the window. I could have shrieked when I saw that each of you thought the other had done it; that showed the state you were in. The window of that tobacco shop was the first one I broke. I broke six more before I'd finished, making seven in all. When I told you, Adelaide, that I had only broken two, I told a lie. I told you that the police had been chasing me all over London. That was true. Somehow they never caught me. I don't know, even now, how I managed to get away from them, but I did. And each time I dodged a policeman I broke another window. Seven windows have I broken this day, all large ones. Now they can send me to penal servitude if they choose. If they do I'll start a hunger strike."

I had never guessed that in Louisa Twynham there was the making of such an heroic person.

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The Case of the Plain Man.

By ARNOLD BENNETT.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.



IV.

In Her Place

of the backbone of the nation. And then it is too late to tell him that he is not perfect, simply because he has forgotten to cultivate the master quality of all qualities — namely, imagination. For imagination must be cultivated early, and it is just the quality that these admirable plain men lack.

By imagination I mean the power to conceive oneself in a situation which one is not actually in; for instance, in another person's place. It is among the sardonic humours of destiny that imagination, while positively dangerous in an ill-balanced mind and of the highest value in a well-balanced mind, is to be found rather in the former than in the latter. And anyhow, the quality is rare in Anglo-Saxon races, which are indeed both afraid and ashamed of it.

And yet could the plain, the well-balanced Anglo-Saxon male acquire it, what a grand world we should live in! The most important thing in the world would be transformed. The most important thing in the world is, ultimately, married life, and the chief practical use of the quality of imagination is to ameliorate married life. But who in England or America (or elsewhere) thinks of it in that connection? The plain man considers that imagination is all very well for poets and novelists. Blockhead! Yes, despite my high esteem for him, I will apply to him the Johnsonian term of abuse. Blockhead! Imagination is super-eminently for himself, and was beyond doubt invented by Providence in order that the plain man might chiefly exercise it in the plain, drudging dailiness of married life. The day cometh, if tardily, when he will do so.

I.

THE plain man is not always mature and successful, as I have hitherto regarded him. He may be unsuccessful in a worldly sense; but from my present point of view I do not much care whether he is unsuccessful or successful in that sense. I know that plain men are seldom failures; their very plainness saves them from the alarming picturesqueness of the abject failure. On the other hand I care greatly whether the plain man is mature or immature, old or young. I should prefer to catch him young. But he is difficult to catch young. The fact is that, just as he is seldom a failure, so he is seldom young. He becomes plain only with years. In youth, even in the thirties, he has fanciful capricious qualities which prevent him from being classed with the average sagacious plain man. He slowly loses these inconvenient qualities, and develops into part

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II.

THESE reflections have surged up in my brain as I contemplate the recent case of my acquaintance, Mr. Omicron, and they are preliminary to a study of that interesting case. Scarce a week ago Omicron was sitting in the Omicron drawing-room alone with Mrs. Omicron. It was an average Omicron evening. Omicron is aged thirty-two. He is neither successful nor unsuccessful, and no human perspicacity can say whether twenty years hence he will be successful or unsuccessful. But anybody can see that he is already on the way to be a plain, well-balanced man. Somewhat earlier than usual he is losing the fanciful capricious qualities and settling down into the stiff backbone of the nation.

Conversation was not abundant.

Said Mrs. Omicron suddenly, with an ingratiating accent:—

"What about that ring that I was to have?"

There was a pause, in which every muscle of the man's body, and especially the facial muscles, and every secret fibre of his soul, perceptibly stiffened. And then Omicron answered, curtly, rebuttingly, reprovingly, snappishly, finishingly:—

"I don't know."

And took up his newspaper, whose fragile crackling wall defended him from attack every bit as well as a screen of twelve-inch armour-plating.

The subject was dropped.

It had endured about ten seconds. But those ten seconds marked an epoch in Omicron's career as a husband—and he knew it not. He knew it not, but the whole of his conjugal future had hung evenly in the balance during those ten seconds, and then slid slightly but definitely—to the wrong side.



Of course, there was more in the affair than appeared on the surface. At dinner the otherwise excellent leg of mutton had proved on cutting to be most noticeably underdone. Now, it is a monstrous shame that first-class mutton should be wasted through inefficient cookery; with third-class mutton the crime might have been deemed less awful. Moreover, four days previously another excellent dish had been rendered unfit for masculine consumption by precisely the same inefficiency or gross negligence, or whatever one likes to call it.



"THE FEMINI
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"EXCUSE FOR THIS LAST DIABOLIC INIQUITY HAD BEEN THAT THE LAST MOMENT HAD DISCOVERED ITSELF TO BE SHORT OF COFFEE."

Nor was that all. The coffee had been thin, feeble, uninteresting. The feminine excuse for this last diabolic iniquity had been that the kitchen at the last moment had discovered itself to be short of coffee—an entirely commonplace episode. Yes, but it is out of commonplace episodes that martyrs are made, and Omicron had been made a martyr. He, if none else, was fully aware that evening that he was a martyr. And the woman had selected just that evening to raise the question of rings, gauds, futile ornamentations! He had said little. But he had stood for the universal husband, and in Mrs. Omicron he saw the universal wife.

III.

His reflections ran somewhat thus:—

"Surely a simple matter to keep enough coffee in the house! A schoolgirl could do it! And yet they let themselves run short of coffee! I ask for nothing out of the way. I make no inordinate demands on the household. But I do like good coffee. And I can't have it! Strange! As for that mutton—one would think there was no clock in the kitchen. One would think that nobody had ever cooked a leg of mutton before. How many legs of mutton have they cooked between them in their lives? Scores; hundreds; I dare say thousands. And yet it hasn't yet dawned on them that a leg of mutton of a certain weight requires a certain time for cooking, and that if it is put down late one of two things must occur—either it will be undercooked or the dinner will be late! Simple enough! Logical enough! Four women in the house [three servants and the wicked, negligent Mrs. Omicron], and yet they must needs waste a leg of mutton through nothing but gross carelessness! It isn't as if it hadn't happened before! It isn't as if I hadn't pointed it out! But women are amateurs. All women are alike. All housekeeping is amateurish. She [Mrs. Omicron, the criminal] has nothing in this world to do but run the house—and see how she runs it! No order! No method! Has she ever studied housekeeping scientifically? Not she! Does she care? Not she! If she had any real sense of responsibility, if she had the slightest glimmering of her own shortcomings, she wouldn't have started on the ring question. But there you are! She only thinks of spending, and titivating herself. I wish she had to do a little earning. She'd find out a thing or two then. She'd find out that life isn't all moonstones and motor-cars. Ring, indeed! It's

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the lack of tact that annoys me. I am an ill-used man. All husbands are ill-used men. The whole system wants altering. However, I must keep my end up. And I will keep my end up. Ring, indeed! No tact!"

He fostered a secret fury. And he enjoyed fostering it. There was exaggeration in these thoughts, which, he would admit next day, were possibly too sweeping in their scope. But he would maintain the essential truth of them. He was not really and effectively furious against Mrs. Omicron; he did not, as a fact, class her with forgers and drunken chauffeurs; indeed, the fellow loved her in his fashion. But he did pass a mature judgment against her. He did wrap up his grudge in cotton-wool and put it in a drawer and examine it with perverse pleasure now and then. He did increase that secretion of poison which weakens the social health of nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand married lives—however delightful they may be. He did render more permanent a noxious habit of mind. He did appreciably and doubly and finally impair the conjugal happiness—for it must not be forgotten that in creating a grievance for himself he also gave his wife a grievance. He did, in fine, contribute to the general mass of misunderstanding between sex and sex.



"SHE ONLY THINKS OF SPENDING, AND TITIVATING HERSELF."

If he is reading this, as he assuredly is, Mr. Omicron will up and exclaim:—

"My wife a grievance! Absurd! The facts are incontrovertible. What grievance can she have?"

The grievance that Mr. Omicron, becoming every day more and more the plain man, is not exercising imagination in the very field where it is most needed.

What is a home, Mr. Omicron? You

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reply that a home is a home. You have always had a home. You were born in one. With luck you will die in one. And you have never regarded a home as anything but a home. Your leading idea has ever been that a home is emphatically not an office nor a manufactory. But suppose you were to unscale your eyes—that is to say, use your imagination—and try to see that a home, in addition to being a home, is an office and manufactory for the supply of light, warmth, cleanliness, ease, and food to a given number of people? Suppose you were to allow it to occur to you that a home emphatically *is* an organization similar to an office and manufactory—and an extremely complicated and delicate one, with many diverse departments, functioning under extremely difficult conditions? For thus it in truth is. Could you once accomplish this feat of the imaginative faculty, you would never again say, with that disdainful accent of yours: "Mrs. Omicron has nothing in the world to do but run the house." For really it would be just as clever for her to say: "Mr. Omicron has nothing in the world to do but run the office."

I admit heartily that Mrs. Omicron is not perfect. She ought to be, of course; but she, alas! falls short of the ideal. Yet in some details she can and does show the way to that archangel, her husband. When her office and manufactory goes wrong, you, Mr. Omicron, are righteously indignant and superior. You majestically wonder that with four women in the house, etc., etc. But when you come home and complain that things are askew in your masculine establishment, and that a period of economy must set in, does she say to you with scorn: "Don't dare to mention coffee to-night. I really wonder that with fourteen (or a hundred and forty) grown men in your establishment you cannot produce an ample and regular income"? No; she makes the best of it. She is sympathetic. And you, Mr. Omicron, would be excessively startled and wounded if she were not sympathetic. Put your imagination to work, and you will see how interesting are these comparisons.

IV.

SHE is an amateur at her business, you say. Well, perhaps she is. But who brought her up to be an amateur? Are you not content to carry on the ancient tradition? As you meditate, and you often do meditate, upon that infant daughter of yours now sleeping in her cot, do you dream of giving her a scientific education in housekeeping, or do you dream of endowing her with the charms that music and foreign languages and physical grace can offer? Do you in your mind's eye see her cannily choosing beef at the butcher's, or shining for your pleasure in the drawing-room?

And then Mrs. Omicron is, perhaps, not so much of an amateur as you assume. People learn by practice. Is there any reason in human nature why a complex machine such as a house may be worked with fewer breakdowns than an office or manufactory? Harness your imagination once more, and transfer to your house the multitudinous minor catastrophes that happen in your office. Be sincere, and admit that the efficiency of the average office is naught but a pretty legend. A mistake or negligence or forgetfulness in an office is remedied and forgotten. Mrs. Omicron — my dear Mr. Omicron—never hears of it. Not so with Mrs. Omicron's office, as your aroused imagination will tell you. Mrs. Omicron's parlourmaid's duster fails to make contact with one small portion of the hall-table. Mr. Omicron walks in, and his godlike glance drops instantly on the dusty place, and Mr. Omicron ejaculates sardonically: "H'm! Four women in the house, and they can't even keep the hall-table respectable!"

Mr. Omicron forgets a letter at the bottom of his unanswered-letter basket, and a week later an excited cable arrives from overseas, and that cable demands another cable. No real harm has been done. Two pounds spent on cables have cured the ill. Mrs. Omicron, preoccupied with a rash on the back of the neck of Miss Omicron before-mentioned, actually comes back from town without having ordered the mutton. In the afternoon she realizes her horrid sin and rushes to the telephone. The butcher reassures her. He swears the desired leg shall arrive. But do you see that boy dallying at the street corner with his mate? He carries the leg of mutton, and he carries also, though he knows it not nor cares, the reputation and happiness of Mrs. Omicron. He is late. As you yourself remarked, Mr. Omicron, if a leg of mutton is put down late to roast, one of two things must occur—either it will be undercooked or the dinner will be late.

Now, if housekeeping was as simple as officekeeping, Mrs. Omicron would smile in tranquillity at the *contretemps*, and say to herself: "Never mind, I shall pay the late-posting fee—that will give me an extra forty minutes." *You* say that, Mr. Omicron, about your letters, when you happen to have taken

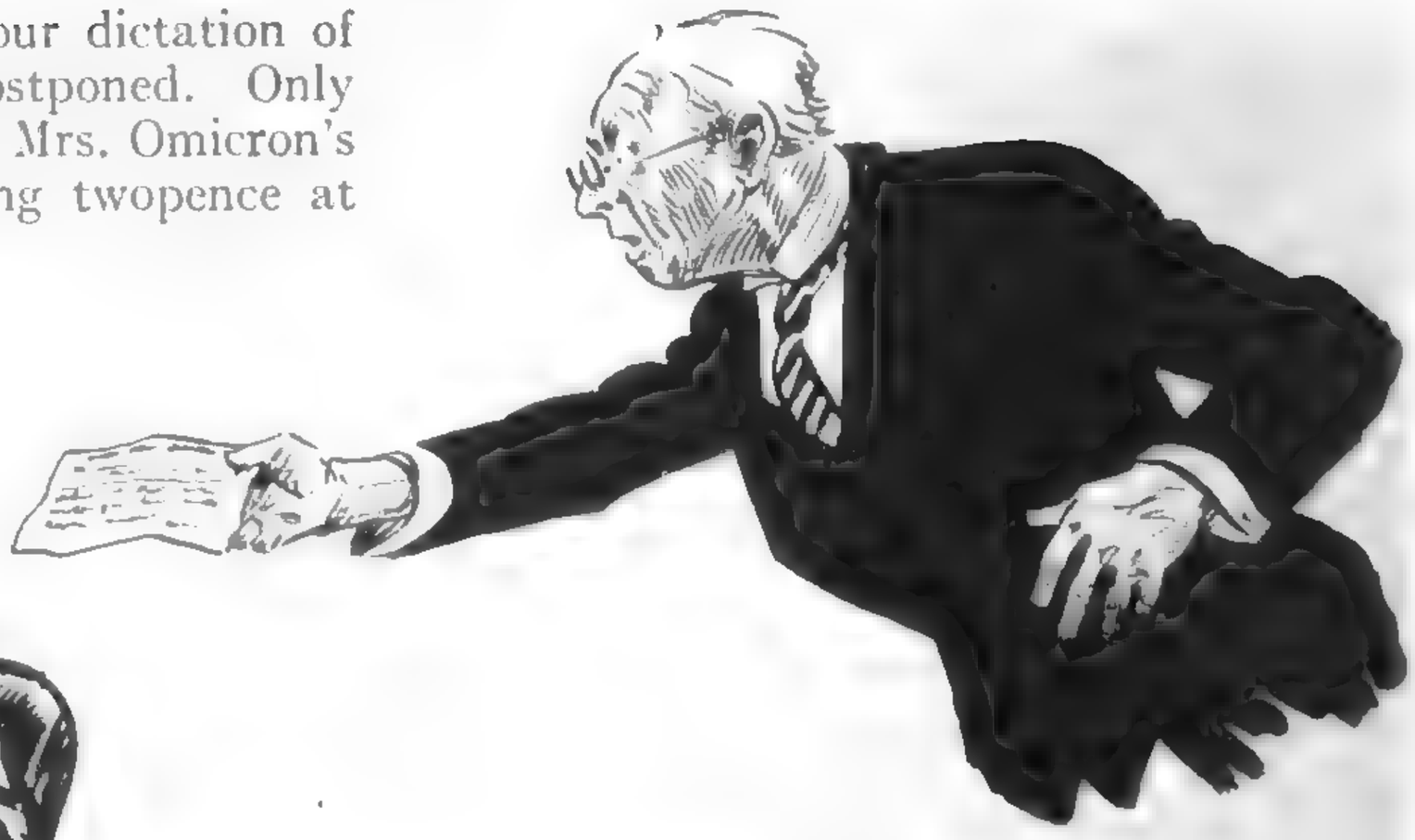
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three hours for lunch and your dictation of correspondence is thereby postponed. Only there is no late-posting fee in Mrs. Omicron's world. If Mrs. Omicron flung twopence at



you when you came home, and informed you that dinner would be forty minutes late and that she was paying the fee, what, Mr. Omicron, would be your state of mind?

And your imagination, now very alert, will carry you even farther than this, Mr. Omicron, and disclose to you still more fearful difficulties which Mrs. Omicron has to face in the management of her office or manufactory. Her staff is uneducated, less educated even than yours. And her staff is universally characterized by certain peculiar ties of mentality. For example, her staff will never, never, never, come and say to her: "Please, ma'am, there is only enough coffee left for two days." No! Her staff will placidly wait forty-eight hours, and then come at seven p.m. and say: "Please, ma'am, there isn't enough coffee——" And worse! You, Mr. Omicron, can say roundly to a clerk: "Look here, if this occurs



"A WEEK LATER AN EXCITED CABLE ARRIVES FROM OVERSEAS."

again I shall fling you into the street." You are aware, and he is aware, that a hundred clerks are waiting to take his place. On the other hand, a hundred mistresses are waiting to take the place of Mrs. Omicron with regard to her cook. Mrs. Omicron has to do as best she can. She has to speak softly and to temper discipline, because the supply of domestic servants is unequal to the demand. And there is still worse. The worst of all, the supreme disadvantage under which Mrs. Omicron suffers, is that most of her errors, lapses, crimes, directly affect a man in the stomach, and the man is a hungry man.

Mr. Omicron, your imagination, now



"HE CARRIES THE LEG OF MUTTON, AND HE CARRIES ALSO, THOUGH HE KNOWS IT NOT NOR CARES, THE REPUTATION AND HAPPINESS OF MRS. OMICRON."

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"PLEASE, MA'AM, THERE ISN'T ENOUGH COFFEE——"

feverishly active, will thus demonstrate to you that your wife's earthly lot is not the velvet couch that you had unimaginativelyassumed it to be, and that indeed, you would not change places with her for a hundred thousand a year. Your attitude towards her human limitations will be modified, and the general mass of misunderstanding between sex and sex will tend to diminish.

(And if even yet your attitude is not modified, let your imagination dwell for a few instants on the extraordinary number of bad and expensive hotels with which you are acquainted—managed, not by amateurish women, but by professional men. And on the obstinate mismanagement of the commissariat of your own club—of which you are continually complaining to members of the house-committee.)

V.

I PASS to another aspect of Mr. Omicron's private reflections consequent upon Mrs. Omicron's dreadful failure of tact in asking him about the ring after the mutton had proved to be underdone and the coffee to be inadequate. "She only thinks of spending," reflected Mr. Omicron, resentfully. A more or less true reflection, no doubt, but there would have been a different colour to it if Mr. Omicron had exercised the greatest of his faculties. Suppose you were to unscale your eyes, Mr. Omicron—that is to say, use your imagination—and try to see that so far as finance is concerned your wife's chief and proper occupation in life is to spend. Conceive what you would say if she announced one morning: "Henry, I am sick of spending. I am going out into the world to earn." Can you not hear yourself employing a classic phrase about "the woman's sphere"? In brief, there would occur an altercation and a shindy.

Your imagination, once set in motion, will show you that your conjugal existence is divided into two great departments—the getting and the spending departments. Wordsworth chanted that in getting and spending we lay waste our powers. We could not lay waste our powers in a more satisfying manner. The two departments, mutually indispensable, balance each other. You organized them. You made yourself the head of one and your wife the head of the other. You might, of course, have organized them otherwise. It



"SHE MAY SOMETIMES HAVE TO FACE A REFUSAL WHEN SHE ASKS FOR MONEY."

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was open to you in the Hottentot style to decree that your wife should do the earning while you did the spending. But for some mysterious reason this arrangement did not appeal to you, and you accordingly go forth daily to the office and return therefrom with money. The theory of your daily excursion is firmly based in the inherent nature of things. The theory is the fundamental cosmic one that money is made in order that money may be spent—either at once or later. Even the miser conforms to this theory, for he only saves in obedience to the argument that the need of spending in the future may be more imperious than is the need of spending at the moment.

The whole of your own personal activity is a mere preliminary to the activity of Mrs. Omicron. Without hers, yours would be absurd, ridiculous, futile, supremely silly. By spending she completes and justifies your labour; she crowns your life by spending. You married her so that she might spend. You wanted someone to spend, and it was understood that she should fill the situation. She was brought up to spend, and you knew that she was brought up to spend. Spending is her vocation. And yet you turn round on her and complain, "She only thinks of spending."

"Yes," you say, "but there is such a thing as moderation." There is; I admit it. The word "extravagance" is no idle word in the English language. It describes a quality which exists. Let it be an axiom that Mrs. Omicron is human. Just as the tendency to get may grow on you, until you become a rapacious and stingy money-grubber, so the tendency to spend may grow on her. One has known instances. A check-action must be occasionally employed. Agreed! But, Mr. Omicron, you should choose a time and a tone for employing it other than you chose on this evening that I have described. A man who mixes up jewelled rings with underdone mutton and feeble coffee is a clumsy man

Exercise your imagination to put yourself in the place of Mrs. Omicron, and you will perceive that she is constantly in the highly-delicate difficulty of having to ask for money, or at any rate of having to suggest or insinuate that money should be given to her. It is her right and even her duty to ask for money, but the foolish, illogical creature—like most



"YOU WERE ATTRACTED TO HER, AND WHAT ATTRACTED YOU WAS A MYSTERIOUS, NEVER-TO-BE-DEFINED QUALITY ABOUT HER."

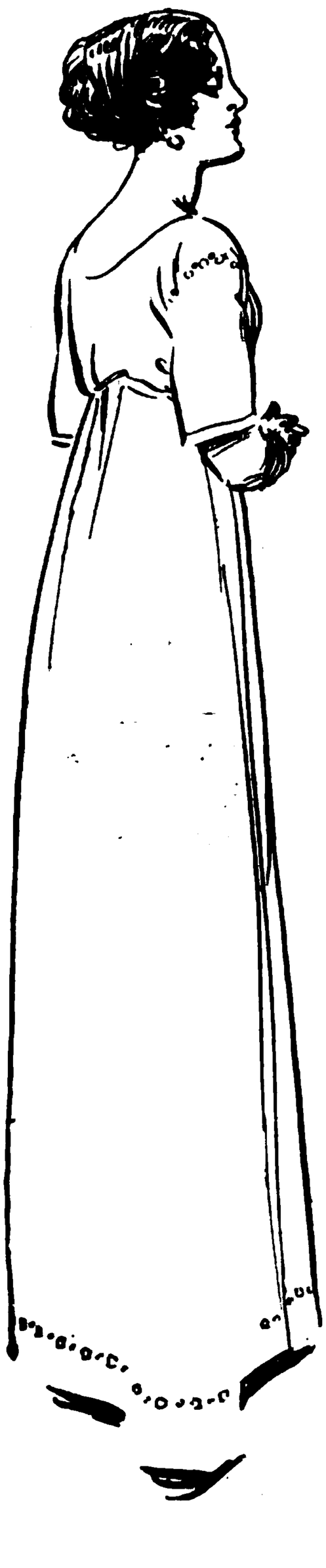
women, even those with generous and polite husbands—regards the process as a little humiliating for herself. You, Mr. Omicron, have perhaps never asked for money. But your imagination will probably be able to make you feel how it feels to ask for money. A woman whose business in life it is to spend money which she does not and cannot earn may sometimes have to face a refusal when she asks for money. But there is one thing from which she ought to be absolutely and eternally safe—and that is a snub.

VI.

And finally, in his reflections as an ill-used man tied for life to a woman who knows not tact, Mr. Omicron asserted further that Mrs. Omicron only thought of spending and titivating herself. To assert that she only thought of spending did not satisfy his spleen;

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he must add "titivating herself." He would admit, of course, that she did as a fact sometimes think of other matters, but still he would uphold the gravamen of his charge. And yet—excellent Omicron!—you have but to look the truth in the face—as a plain commonsense man will—and to use your imagination, in order to perceive that there really is no gravamen in the charge.



Why did you insist on marrying Mrs. Omicron? She had the reputation of being a good housekeeper (as girls go); she was a serious girl, kind-hearted, of irreproachable family, having agreeable financial expectations, clever, well-educated, good-tempered pretty. But the truth is that you married her for none of these attributes. You married her because you were attracted to her; and what attracted you was a mysterious, never-to-be-defined quality about her—an effluence, an emanation, a lurking radiance, an entirely enigmatic charm. In the end "charm" is the one word that even roughly indicates that element in her personality which caused you to lose your head about her. A similar phenomenon is to be observed in all marriages of inclination. A similar phenomenon is at the bottom of most social movements. Why, the Men's League for Women's Suffrage itself certainly came into being through the strange workings of that same phenomenon! You married Mrs. Omicron doubtless because she was "suitable," but her "suitability," for you, consisted in the way she breathed, the way she crossed a room, a transient gesture, a vibration in her voice, a blush, a glance, the curve of an arm—nothing, nothing—and yet everything!

You may condescend towards this quality of hers, Mr. Omicron—you may try to dismiss it as "feminine charm," and have done with it. But you cannot have done with it. And the fact will ever remain that you are incapable of supplying it yourself, with all your talents and your divine commonsense. You are an extremely wise and good man, but you cannot ravish the senses of a roomful of people by merely walking downstairs, by merely throwing a shawl over your shoulders, by a curious depression in the corner of one cheek. This gift of grace is not yours. Wise as you are, you will be still wiser if you do not treat it disdainfully. It is among the supreme things in the world. It has made a mighty lot of history, and not improbably will make some more—even yours.

You were not the only person aware of the formidable power (for formidable it was) which she possessed over you. She, too, was aware of it, and is still. She knows that when she exists in a particular way, she will produce in your existence a sensation which, though fleeting, you prefer to all other sensations—a sensation unique. And this quality by which she disturbs and enchants you is her main resource in the adventure of life. Shall she not cherish this quality, adorn it, intensify it? On the contrary, you well know that you would be very upset and amazed if Mrs. Omicron were to show signs of neglecting this quality of hers which yearns for rings. And, if you have ever entered a necktie-shop and been dazzled by the spectacle of a fine necktie into "hanging expense"—if you have been through this wondrous experience, your imagination, duly prodded, will enable you to put yourself into Mrs. Omicron's place when she mentions the subject of rings. "Titivating herself"? Good heavens, she is helping the very earth to revolve! And you smote the defenceless creature with a lethal word—because the butcher's boy dallied at a street-corner.

You insinuate that one frail hand may carry too many rings. You reproduce your favourite word "moderation." Mr. Omicron, I take you. I agree as to the danger. But if Mrs. Omicron is human, let us also bear in mind the profound truth that not one of us is more human than another.

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Sulphur's National.

By TALBOT MUNDY.

Illustrated by Cyrus Cuneo, R.I.

I.

"I HAVE!" said the Honourable William Allison. And he closed his lips so tightly when he had said it, and his merry face looked so comically sorry, that Gladys Powers had no need to guess what the answer was.

"Tell me all about it," she said, promptly. She smiled back at him, but there was concern written in her big, dark eyes. "First of all, what did you say?"

"Me? Oh, I told him I should like to marry you, don't you know, and all that kind of thing—said you were a charming girl, and so on, and that I thought we'd hit it off together like the people in a book."

She was trembling on the very verge of laughter, and drew out her handkerchief to hide it from him.

"Go on; what did he do?"

"Sat down hard, and gasped, and glared at me."

"I can see him doing it," she said. "What did he say when he'd finished glaring?"

"He never left off glaring once. But he said he'd no time for hereditary boneheads—dashed if I know what a bonehead is exactly, but I'll bet it's something rude—and that he wouldn't let his daughter marry one on any terms. Said there were boneheads enough in the States, without coming across the water to find one."

"What did you say to that?"

"I didn't say anything. He added a lot of tommy-rot about the idea of an aristocracy being all wrong anyhow; and he said that there wasn't an aristocrat that he'd ever met that could make enough money to keep a girl of spirit in candy and cigarettes. So I asked him whether he'd have liked me any better if I'd been a bricklayer."

The dimples began to dance again at the idea of the Honourable William Allison laying bricks. Her eyes laughed at him above her handkerchief, and she dared not speak for fear of her voice betraying her amusement. She loved this lean, clean-looking Englishman very dearly; but love had not killed her sense of humour, and she was possessed by the American delusion that no Englishman can see a joke. So she played with her handkerchief, and nodded to him to continue.

"Most extraordinary thing, but the mention of bricks doesn't seem to agree with him at all. Made him positively savage. Almost thought he was goin' to try to bite me."

"No, no, no! Not bricks—bricklaying! He made his money building, you know. He's been fighting the bricklayers' union all his life. He says that from first to last they've cost him fifteen million."

"Fifteen million what—pounds?"

"No—dollars."

"He must be most uncommonly oofy to spend that much money fightin' a lot of bricklayers.'

"Pa's not exactly a pauper, you know."

"Confound him! He called me one!"

"Why, that's exactly what you called yourself when you proposed to me."

"I know I did. But I didn't mean it as literally as all that. I've got fifteen hundred a year of my own."

"Dollars?"

"No—pounds."

"My!" exclaimed Gladys, impudently, and laughing openly at last. "Did you tell him that?"

"Of course I did. I said that I didn't know of anything else against me personally, and I repeated all that about how fond of you I am, and I said that as his son-in-law I supposed I might amount to something financially some day. But he got awfully red in the face, and said he wouldn't have me for a son-in-law at any price."

"Oh, do hurry up. What was the end of it?"

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"Well, I asked him whether we couldn't come to some sort of terms. He said no. So I reminded him that as a business man —which he seemed so proud of calling himself—he must realize that there's a way of compromising everything. Then he said suddenly that if I'd prove to him that I'm not a bonehead he'd consider it. By the way, what the deuce is a bonehead?"

"A fool. Go on—what then?"

"I invited him to be a little more explicit. He said, 'Go and make ten thousand pounds within the next six months and show it to me. Then I'll let Gladys do as she likes about it.' So I bowed myself out. He'd named his terms."

Gladys Powers dug the point of her umbrella into the frozen February grass, and frowned.



"GO AND MAKE TEN THOUSAND POUNDS WITHIN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS AND SHOW IT TO ME."

"I call it mean of pa," she exclaimed, "to talk to you that way. He's perfectly crazy to get into Society over here, and he hasn't been able to do it."

"Pretty cool of him, then, I call it, to talk the way he did about my bein' an aristocrat. He'd find himself in Society in a minute if he'd let you marry me."

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"Oh! If you could only get the better of him," she exclaimed, "he'd think the world of you. Won't you try? Do try! Use all the brains you've got. I'm sure you'll be able to, if you try hard enough. It isn't that you're poor. He doesn't mind that; he wants me to marry a man with brains. Try, won't you?"

"I'll have a try," he said, in a low voice. "Tell me, is he really keen on this idea of gettin' into Society?"

"He's crazy about it. He's crazy because he's failed."

Bill Allison reflected again for about a minute.

"I don't see how that's goin' to help much," he said, more to himself than to Gladys Powers. "Still"—and he looked straight into her eyes, and she read resource there, and believed in him, and took courage—"I can but try. We'll see."

II.

An hour later the Honourable William Allison strolled into one of the most exclusive clubs, and subsided gloomily into a deep arm-chair. When he considered that he was expected to pit his brains against those of Pushful Powers, the "Construction King" of the United States, whose first extraordinary name so aptly suited him, the hopelessness of the situation was about the only phase of it that he could see.

"Halloa, Bill!" said a pleasant voice beside him, and he started and looked round.

"You, Galloway? Why the deuce didn't you speak before? How long have you been here? Were you here when I came in?"

"Thought I'd watch you, Bill. Dashed interestin', believe me. First time in my life that I ever saw you lookin' gloomy. Bill, you're in love!"

"No. You're wrong, confound you!"

"You can't deceive me, Bill. There's only three things can make a man miserable—women, money, and his liver. Your troubles don't amount to anything. Listen to my tale of woe. Trainin' stable all gone to the deuce, an' that brute Sulphur so savage that nobody can do a thing with him. Pity of it is that he's entered for the Grand National, and he could win it if only I could find a man to ride him. But I've got to sell him. My stable's been losin' me money for so long that I simply can't stave off my creditors for another week."

"Is Sulphur fit?" asked Allison.

An idea seemed to have risen new-born behind his eyes, for they positively blazed as he leaned forward and looked keenly at Galloway.

"He's as fit as a fiddle now. He won't be, though, in a week's time. All he needs is gallopin', and I tell you I can't get a man to ride him."

Bill Allison lay back in his chair again, with his tall hat tipped forward over his eyes. That idea of his seemed to be filtering in. His long, lean legs—one crossed over the other—moved up and down rhythmically, and the fingers of his right hand drummed gently on the arm of the chair.

"Tell me, Sammy—are you keen on sellin' Sulphur? D'you want to get out of the racin' game for good?"

"Want to? I should say not! If I could think of any way out of quittin'——"

"I've thought of one!"

"Out with it, then, as you love me!"

They talked together for the next three hours, mysteriously; and every now and then one or the other of them was emphatic. At the end of that time the Honourable William Allison hurried to his chambers and superintended the packing of his portmanteaux. A little later he took a train into the country. But Sammy Galloway, contrary to his original intentions, remained in town.

III.

There was nobody in London with a more varied or extensive acquaintance than Sammy Galloway. So he had no difficulty whatever in securing an introduction to Mr. Pushful Powers, and it was of such a nature that that gentleman was compelled to receive him and listen attentively to what he had to say.

Mr. Powers had been just long enough in England to realize that letters of introduction from influential sources were seldom guileless when addressed to himself. So there was a note of challenge in his voice, and it acted as a tonic to Sammy Galloway. He displayed true genius by tackling his quarry in the one way that was at all likely to have effect.

"I've come to talk business," he said, as he took a seat.

"Good!" said Pushful Powers. "I'm listening."

"I've been told—and I won't divulge the name of my informant on any terms—that you are anxious to get into the best society over here."

Powers stood up as though a spring had been suddenly released inside him. "Go on," he said, noncommittally.

"I can show you the way—on terms."

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Powers sat down again, and the two men looked at each other in tense silence for about a minute—summing one another up. Each liked the appearance of the other. There was no gainsaying the rugged strength of the millionaire; he looked like what he was—a born fighter, whom many victories had made self-confident. And Sammy Galloway, who looked the acme of good-nature, also looked honest.

"Let's hear all about it," said Mr Powers. "What would you do, for instance?" he asked, after a moment.

"Win a classic race."

"Win a what?"

"Be the owner of a horse that wins the Grand National, for instance."

"I shouldn't know how to go about it."

"Exactly!" repeated Sammy. "That's where I come in."

"Well—come in. Tell me."

"I own a horse that can win the National, and I've got to sell him. I'm broke, you understand."

Powers got up again and began to pace the room. "How do you know he can win the National?" he demanded, abruptly.

"How do you ever know in advance that you can put through one of your big business deals?" asked Sammy.

"That's different. It's my hand that puts 'em through. I succeed where another man would very likely fail. I know how."

"That's my case again," said Sammy, triumphantly. "I could sell this horse for enough money to get me out of debt; but the man who bought him couldn't win the National with him. He needs riding, and I've got the only man in England who can do it. He's a brute of a horse—savage as they make 'em—wants a real man on his back."

"Then you want me to buy your horse? Is that what it all amounts to?"

"Not by a long way! I'm offering to win the National with him for you, and I'm willing to be paid by results. That horse is worth about three thousand guineas as he stands; they'd pay that price for him for the stud, and anyone you care to ask will confirm what I say. I'm asking you two thousand guineas for him—cash; and in return for that amount I'll transfer him, engagements and all, into your name. If he doesn't win the National he's yours anyhow, and you'll be able to sell him again for enough to get back the two thousand—together with the expenses of my training stable, which I'll expect you to guarantee from now until the race comes off. If he wins, I get your cheque for ten thousand pounds immediately after the race."

"But is this business of winning the Grand National going to help me socially?"

"Believe me," said Sammy, darkly, "there's positively nothing you could do that would help you more."

Powers drew the stub of a pencil from his pocket and tossed it up and down on the palm of his hand in a movement that was characteristic of him when he was making up his mind. "Supposing he wins—who gets the stake?" he asked.

"You do."

"When is the Grand National run?"

"Latter part of March—say six weeks from now."

"And this jockey you speak of—are you sure of him?"

"Absolutely. If he doesn't ride the horse you can call the deal off, and I'll pay you your money back."

Powers looked hard at him through narrowed eyes. This man was certainly a gentleman—his introductions were beyond all question everything that they ought to be; he looked honest and spoke squarely. The proposition was unusual, but——

"Will you give me your word of honour that this proposition's on the level?" he demanded.

"Certainly."

Powers tossed the pencil up and caught it. His mind was made up.

"I'll go with you, then. How much cash did you say? Two thousand guineas—two thousand one hundred pounds, eh?"

And Mr. Pushful Powers produced his cheque-book, and made out a cheque in favour of Mr. Sammy Galloway for that amount.

IV.

Six weeks later the fashionable sporting crowd put in its annual appearance on Aintree racecourse. It was as different from a summer-season racing crowd as could easily be imagined. The people who brave the March winds at Aintree are those who go racing for the love of it, and not just because it happens to be the thing to do. Nine-tenths of them at least know the points of a horse, and what his probable chances are. Some of them have friends riding in the race. Almost all of them know one or two of the owners personally, and by far the most of them bet heavily and with discretion. The bookmakers need to be uncommonly wary in laying odds against a

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Grand National horse, for they are betting very largely with men who know.

Galloway, most immaculately dressed, leaned against the paddock railing, and talked through it to his friend Allison. Allison was overcoated from ears to heels. He looked thinner than when he and Sammy had talked together at the club, but the glow of health was on him, he seemed happy as a school-boy.

"What odds are they laying?" demanded Allison.

"Twenty to one."

"I don't wonder," said Allison, looking over his shoulder at Sulphur. The big red devil of a horse was being led round and round the paddock at what was intended to be a walk, blanketed until nothing of him was visible except his savage eye, that peeped out through a hole in his hood.

As Allison spoke the brute snorted and squealed and snatched at his leading rein, and a pitched battle followed between him and the man who led him. A series of eddies swirled in the watching crowd, as people moved away suddenly to avoid his heels. Above the buzz and clamour of the crowd came the raucous bellowing of a bookmaker. "Twenties Sulphur! Twenty to one Sulphur!" But no one seemed anxious to bet on him.

"Have you got the money on?" asked Allison.

"Yes."

"The whole two thousand?"

"Every single penny of it at an average of twenties. Had to split it up with a score of bookies, here and in London."

"So we stand to win forty thousand pounds, eh?"

"We do—or else lose everything."

"Don't think of it. How did you keep old Powers out of the way?"

"He and Miss Powers were awfully keen to come into the paddock," said Sammy. "But I told him it wouldn't do. I harped on the social string—reminded him what he'd bought the horse for—said I wanted his entrance on the scene to be as dramatic as possible—asked him to wait until the race was over before showing up, and then lead in the winner. I told him it 'ud have a far bigger effect than if he wandered about the paddock now. He didn't like it a bit, but he gave in. He and Miss Powers are sitting in a box right in the middle of the grand stand, and they're both of 'em half frantic for the race to begin. I'd better go over to 'em now, and try to keep 'em quiet. So long! Good luck, Bill!"

"So long, Sammy! Good luck!"

As Sammy Galloway joined the little party in the box, Sulphur's price began to alter in the betting.

"Why, they're only laying fifteen to one against him now," said Gladys Powers. "Listen. I wonder why that is?"

"Dunno, I'm sure," said Sammy, taking the vacant chair between her and her father. "Unless someone in the crowd's spotted who's going to ride him."

"Why, is the jockey so well known? I thought he was just one of your men."

"Oh, he's fairly well known," said Sammy. "Listen. They've shortened him some more."

"Twelve to one Sulphur! Twelve to one Sulphur!" barked the bookies.

Then up went the numbers on the board.

There was a sudden silence, and everybody craned forward to watch the horses coming out. Seventeen of them, prancing and cavorting, filed out one by one on to the course. They missed their blankets, for the March wind nipped them; and as they danced on tip-toe in their eagerness to get their heads down and be off they presented as fine a spectacle as could be witnessed anywhere. The last to come out was Sulphur—seventeen hands of plunging red devilry, and as he reared on his hind legs and see-sawed through the gate the crowd began to hum again with conversation.

But the bookies were still silent. To a man they were watching Sulphur through field-glasses. Suddenly one of them closed his glasses with a snap and turned towards the rest.

"It is!" he yelled, excitedly. "Tens Sulphur! Ten to one Sulphur!"

The last-minute plungers, who always form a quite considerable percentage of the betting crowd, took that to be an echo of inside information. There was a rush to get on at ten to one, and in a moment the price had shortened down to eights.

"He'll be the favourite in a minute at this rate," said the millionaire, grinning with pleasure that he took no trouble to conceal.

"Who cares now?" said Galloway. "Watch him!"

Sulphur was the biggest and by far the finest looking of the field. He came on to the course sideways, fighting for his head like a mad devil. He seemed the squealing, dancing, plunging, lashing embodiment of energy. His red coat shone like new satin, and his great muscles played up and down beneath it like springs of tempered steel.

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He was a picture of a horse. Anyone with half an eye could see that he was trained down to the last touch, and the rider who sat him so perfectly and coaxed and steadied him seemed as lithe and well-trained as the horse.

He danced sideways all the way to the grand stand, and then his rider's long, lean legs straightened him at last, and held him straight, and he swept off at a canter towards the starting-post.

"That man's face seems strangely familiar," said Pushful Powers, staring through his field-glasses.

Gladys Powers had thought the same thing. She, too, was watching closely through her glasses.

"Who did you say his jockey was?" she asked Sammy. "Bill who?"

"Watch, Miss Powers. This'll be worth watching!"

"It looked almost like——"

"Oh, all men look pretty much alike in racing kit. Watch!"

Every rider excepting Sulphur's gave his horse a trial jump over the first fence on the course. But Sulphur was taken straight down to the starting-point. It seemed better to the man who rode him to take the first jump blind than to let the horse have his head yet for so much as a second. He kept him by the starting-gate until the other horses came and lined up on either side of him.

The start of a long race like the Grand National is a simple enough matter as a rule, for it makes very little difference if one horse does happen to be a foot or two in front of the rest. A yard in five miles is no handicap—at the beginning. The starter kept his eyes on Sulphur, who was kicking and fighting and rearing up in his best style. The moment that Sulphur's head was level with the barrier, and the other horses were in something like a line, he let them go.

"They're off!" roared the crowd.

It is like the thunder of a big wave on rocks, and the growl of the undertow, that sudden exclamation of the waiting crowd. It thrills even the oldest race-goer, and Gladys Powers leaned against the rail in front of her, and tried to stop her heart from palpitating by pressing it against the wood. The silence of the dead followed, as the horses raced neck and neck for the first jump. They reached it all together in a bunch. Sulphur rose at it as though it were a mountain, shot over it without touching a twig, and landed neatly in his stride on the far side, half a length in front of the rest. Between that jump and the next he continued to gain steadily.

But the Grand National is a five-mile race, or thereabouts—five miles of the stiffest going in the world. The jumps are prodigious. No ordinary horse could get across them, and none but the stoutest-hearted man dare try to ride him. The pace was a cracker, and Sammy Galloway, gazing through his glasses beside Gladys Powers, grunted and ground his teeth.

"What's the matter?" asked Gladys.

"He's taking it too fast. Watch him!"

He had reached the open ditch already, a misnamed contraption with a guard-rail in front of it, and a thumping big fence on the far side; it has been the death of more good men and horses than all the other risks of steeplechasing put together.

As Galloway spoke, Sulphur's rider dropped his hands, and the horse swung his great hind legs under him, and leapt over it like a cat. He cleared it without touching, and his rider, his head a little to one side, watched his forefeet critically to see how he placed them when he landed.

"Look at him!" said Sammy. "Ain't he cool? But what's he takin' it so fast for?"

Sulphur was a full length in the lead now, striding along as though he found the going easy, and eating up the distances between jumps with long, easy, swinging strides that told of tremendous strength still in reserve. He had one hundred and forty pounds to carry, twenty-eight pounds less than the top weight, and he was making nothing of it. The two horses next behind him rose at the open ditch together, cannoned heavily, and fell, one of them with a broken back. The remainder cleared it, but the accident gave Sulphur a lead of two full lengths. The race had still nearly four miles to go, and Galloway, watching through his field-glasses, could see Sulphur's rider looking behind him to see where the others were.

"Take a pull, man! Take a pull!" he grumbled out aloud. "There's simply tons of time."

"Didn't you give him instructions how to ride before the race started?" asked Gladys, who had been reading up horse-racing matters since her father had become an owner.

"Me? Tell Bill how to ride? I should say not. He's out and away the best horseman in England. Watch him!"

Sulphur, slugging his head against the bit, seemed bent on increasing the lead still further, and his rider seemed quite disposed to let him do it. The great horse was still sweeping along without any apparent effort,

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and jumping as a cat jumps—carefully. The pace, though, was nothing short of tremendous. It was much too hot to last, and the field was tailing out behind already. As they rounded the turn for home, Sulphur



"SUDDENLY SHE CLUTCHED AT SAMMY'S SLEEVE AND WHISPERED TO HIM. 'TELL ME, MR. GALLOWAY, WHO'S THAT RIDING HIM?'"

was more than four lengths in the lead. Six other horses were waiting on him, and going strong, one little brown horse that was running fourth seeming to go well within himself. They were all six letting Sulphur make the pace for them, and every one of them was clearly to be reckoned with.

As they galloped up towards the grand stand, though, Sulphur's rider seemed to be cracking on the pace even a little faster. He moved on him, and those who watched him narrowly enough through field-glasses could see him speaking to the horse. Gladys was one of those who watched the rider's face. Suddenly she clutched at Sammy's sleeve and whispered to him.

"Tell me, Mr. Galloway, who's that riding him? It looks from here like—— It is, isn't it?"

"Quiet now, Miss Powers," said Sammy.

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"Don't give the game away. Yes, it is. Watch him!"

"Five to one Sulphur!" bellowed a solitary bookie. But no one seemed disposed to bet. Anybody could see what was likely to happen unless Sulphur's rider slowed down a bit. The horse that leads in that early stage of the game seldom wins the National. The knowing ones among the crowd were scanning the other horses, trying to pick out a likely winner from among the rearguard.

As Sulphur galloped past the grand stand Sammy Galloway found time to scrutinize Mr. Powers's face for a second. The millionaire was watching the horse as though his whole fortune depended on his winning. He had no time to study the rider, and no idea as yet as to who was on the horse's back, and Sammy heaved a sigh of relief as he turned to watch the race again.

The horses were starting on their second journey round the course, and there was beginning now to be something different in the gait of Sulphur that was noticeable to a close observer. The other horses scarcely began to gain on him as yet; they still waited on him five or six lengths in the rear, and trailing out a little—but only a little. But all six of them were going very strong. On the other hand, Sulphur's stride had lost a little of its elasticity. Carefully nursed, he looked good enough to win the race yet, especially considering the lead he had, but there were more than two miles of wicked country still ahead of him, and he needed riding.

Saving the one question of pace, he was being ridden perfectly; no man could have ridden him better. Jump by jump, his rider schooled him over the fiercest course in England as coolly and perfectly as though he were out for a practice gallop, and so far Sulphur had not touched a twig. But the pace was a killer.

A bookie voiced the general sentiment. "Ten to one Sulphur!" he roared. Several people laughed. Nobody ran to bet with him at the longer odds. Then at the water-jump Sulphur put a foot wrong as he landed, and stumbled badly.

"He's down!" roared the crowd.

Gladys Powers smothered a scream and clutched at Sammy's sleeve.

He was not down though. The stumble had cost him a good length of his lead, but he was up and going strong. Miss Powers released her hold of Sammy's arm, and the colour came back to her face again. Her breath still came in little gasps, though, and her father heard it. He glanced hurriedly in her direction, but, like his daughter, he could not tear his eyes away from the race for more than a second at a time.

Now two of the other horses were beginning to challenge Sulphur's lead. Whips were going, their jockeys moved on them, and the distance between them and Sulphur began to grow gradually less. They gained very little on him between the jumps, for his long, easy strides were in his favour, and he was almost able to hold his own, but at each jump they lessened his lead, for he had begun to pause before taking off, and he was landing clumsily—pecking, as they call it—on the far side. Each pause and each mistake cost him five yards or more.

Then there were only three jumps left to take, and a straight run home of less than two furlongs. He might do it yet, but it seemed very doubtful. Sammy Galloway gripped his glasses, and ground his teeth, and swore beneath his breath. Gladys Powers clutched his arm again, and her father stood up in the box, rigid with excitement. The crowd was beginning to roar at the top of its lungs, and that noise is born of an excitement that is contagious.

"Oh, Bill, you idiot!" groaned Galloway. "Steady him, man! Steady! Take a pull, and let 'em pass you. You'll catch 'em again in the straight. Oh, you idiot!"

Even as he spoke, the man he apostrophized took up his whip, and sent home three good rousing wallops to Sulphur's ribs.

He and the two that followed him were midway to the last jump, and Sulphur was evidently tiring. The second horse, the little one that had been running fourth so gamely all the way, was coming up hand over hand.

"Twenty to one Sulphur!" roared a bookie, and a chorus of other bookies echoed him.

Then the horses and their riders caught the intoxicating roar from the stands, the roar of an appreciative crowd that has turned the heads of contestants ever since the dawn of history, and has ruined many a fellow's chances. It was the crucial moment. There was not very much in it between the horses. All of them were stretched to their limit. They were all of them more than a little spent. It was still anybody's race. Brain was needed at this crisis—brain and nerve and judgment.

Galloway groaned.

Sulphur's rider was flogging like a wild man—or seemed to be. It was the one absolute and only thing he should not have done.

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Just behind him, gaining on him fast, and coming up on the inside, was the little brown horse. He and Sulphur charged at the last hurdle side by side, racing shoulder to shoulder for it, with Sulphur's head only the least little bit in front. *Crack* came his rider's whip! Sulphur slipped badly at the take-off, and hit the hurdle hard with both hind legs.

"He's down!" roared the crowd.

"Now ride!" yelled Galloway, all his reserve gone from him completely. "Ride, man, ride!"

The man in front had glanced over his shoulder, and, seeing that he was leading by a safe margin, had pulled up a bit to save his horse. There was more than a furlong still of straight going on good green grass, and the race was still to win.



"THIS TIME SULPHUR WAS REALLY DOWN."

"Any price you like Sulphur!" bellowed the bookies in chorus.

This time Sulphur was really down, kicking and struggling like a brute possessed. His rider was still on him, clinging with both hands to his neck, and trying to force his weight backwards into the saddle again. Sulphur kicked and struggled, and rose to his feet. Gladys Powers screamed. Powers swore, and smashed his glasses against the rail in front of him. The third horse rose at the jump, cleared it, and missed Sulphur on the far side by about an inch.

"It's all up!" groaned Galloway, and the millionaire looked towards him and nodded.

"Worth it, though," he said, with a wry smile. "I was never more excited in my life."

"Thank Heaven he wasn't killed," said Gladys. She was white as a sheet and trembling.

"Oh, watch!" said Sammy. "Watch!"

The crowd was yelling and thundering in the stand. They had reckoned without Sulphur and his rider. The big red devil was game to the last kick, and his last kick

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was not due yet by a long way. It dawned on the brute suddenly that there were two horses now in front of him. That, and the whip and his rider's spurs, convinced him that there was still a fight ahead, and he settled down to catch them in real earnest. He passed the second horse like a flash, and gave chase to the little one in front with his eyes shut and his head slugged against the bit, while the crowd roared and yelled until the grand stand sounded like the thunder of an army.

"He'll do it! By Heaven, he'll do it!"

"He can't!"

"He will!"

"Ten to one Sulphur! Five to one Sulphur! Even money Sulphur!" The odds came down to nothing in quick succession, as the bookies craned their necks to watch the finish.

"He's done it! He's done it!"

"Oh, heavens!" cried Galloway. "Look at that, will you?"

The whip was out again, and Sulphur's rider was putting in all he knew. The whip rose and fell like a flail.

"He's not floggin' him! D'you see that? He's not floggin' him! Look! Oh, Bill—you're the cunningest old dog that ever——"

Bill was flogging at his boot. The rider of the first horse heard the *whack, whack, whack* behind him, and started his own whip going. He flogged his horse, though. The game little fellow changed his feet, and in that second Sulphur caught up with him. Then down came Bill's whip on Sulphur's flank, and he spurted, and the two flashed past the winning-post in a thundering, snorting, sweating, wild-eyed streak—so close together that no one outside the judge's box could tell which was the winner.

Then the roar of the crowd died down to expectant silence, while everybody watched the number-board. A man started fumbling with the numbers, and Sammy saw them even before they were on the board.

"Ten—seventeen—six!" he read off. Ten was Sulphur.

V.

"COME on, Mr. Powers!" said Sammy Galloway. "You're too late to lead him in, but you can see him in the paddock."

He took Miss Powers's arm, and the millionaire followed them to the paddock at a run. Sulphur was already blanketed again, and was trying hard to eat a stable-hand who was leading him back to his box, and Galloway left them looking at him while he hurried round to the weighing-room door. There he waited patiently, and presently the Honourable William Allison emerged in jockey kit, covered with mud and foam, but beaming.

"Bill, you idiot, we've won twenty-five thousand pounds a-piece, and it's just twenty-five thousand more than you deserve. What in Heaven's name possessed you to ride the race like that?"

"Point is, I won it, Sammy. Had to ride it that way. Haven't been riding Sulphur in his gallops every day for nothing, you know. I got a line on him right away at the start. If you pull him he sulks and fights. You've got to let him gallop his hardest all the way, and whip the steam out of him at the finish. Got that cheque for ten thousand yet?"

"Of course not. I can't ask him yet."

"You must, Sammy. I've got to have it."

"Better leave it till Monday, hadn't we? Let him settle up like the bookies—that'll be soon enough."

"No, Sam; I've got to have it now. You get your share when the bookies pay on Monday; but I want that ten thousand now. Go and find him and make him write it out, while I have a tub and a change. Bring it to me in the dressing-room."

"All right, Bill; I suppose you're running this. I'll ask him. But I say, I should feel awfully mean if he tried to kick me. I'm beginning to like the old boy."

"He's not half a bad old boy, Sammy; but I'm going to like him a lot better when I've got that cheque. Trot along and get it."

It seemed to Mr. Pushful Powers a little bit like sharp business to be asked for his cheque almost the instant that the race was over. He was beginning to wonder, too, where all the social glamour was that had been promised him; nobody had noticed him as yet. However, he was a man of his word, and he produced his cheque-book and a fountain-pen and wrote out a cheque for ten thousand pounds in favour of Sammy Gall-way.

"Meet you in the box," said Sammy, turning to hurry away again. "I'm going to bring something in the Society line to introduce to you," he added, over his shoulder, as an afterthought.

So there was nothing for it but for Mr. Powers and his daughter to go back to their box in the grand stand again, and wait there, wondering.

But twenty minutes later Sammy Galloway came back to them, and with him was the Honourable William Allison, quite immacu-

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"THE TWO FLASHED PAST THE WINNING-POST SO CLOSE TOGETHER THAT NO

lately dressed, smiling as usual, and perfectly at ease. He raised his hat to Gladys, but said nothing to her. She watched him in absolute amazement, for the contrast between this dandy and the man in silk who had ridden Sulphur was almost unbelievable. Allison walked straight up to the millionaire, and produced a folded piece of paper from his pocket.

"Here's the ten thousand you mentioned, Mr. Powers," he said, smiling affably.

Powers seized the piece of paper and examined it. It was his own cheque for ten thousand that he had given Sammy Gallowav.

"This isn't yours," said the millionaire. "You're not Galloway!"

"Look on the other side, won't you? You'll see that he's endorsed it over to me."

"What's the meaning of all this?" asked Powers.

"That cheque's good for ten thousand, I suppose?"

"Certainly."

"Well, that's the ten thousand that you told me to go and make. I preferred that it should be ten thousand of your money, that's all."

"Then you and Mr. Galloway are—er——"

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ONE OUTSIDE THE JUDGE'S BOX COULD TELL WHICH WAS THE WINNER."

"Accomplices," suggested Allison.

"Who thought out this scheme?" asked Pushful Powers, bewildered for almost the first time in his life.

"Bill did," said Sammy. "I simply obeyed orders. We were both of us broke, and we've each of us made twenty-five thousand, thanks to him—and you."

"How long did I give you to make the ten thousand in?" asked the millionaire, with something like amusement in his eye.

"Six months," said Allison.

"And you've done it in six weeks, eh? And my money. Well, I know when I'm licked. Shake!"

"You've got everything you bargained for," said Allison, trying not to laugh. "As my prospective father-in-law, you'll have the *entrée* into Society right away. May I take it that your—ah—your objection is—ah—withdrawn?"

"You may."

The Honourable William Allison turned to Gladys. "Care to come into the paddock?" he asked her, almost casually.

"I'll go anywhere in the world with you," she answered.

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"Joe Gargery."

And His Recollections of Dickens.

By T. ANDREW RICHARDS.

"YES, sir, I knew Mr. Dickens—I knew him well, and I have been told that he has put me in one of his novels. I don't remember much about it, but the book is called 'Great Expectations.'"

So said John Cayford, the original of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, in that intensely human story of little Pip, when, by a piece of rare good fortune, the writer unearthed him in his clean but severely plain apartments in Crompton Road, London.

Allowing for the changes brought on by advancing years, he answered in every detail to the description which Charles Dickens gives of him in the second chapter of the book named:—

"Joe was a fair man, with curls of flaxen hair on each side of his smooth face, and with eyes of such a very undecided blue that they seemed to have somehow got mixed with their own whites. He was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow—a sort of Hercules in strength, and also in weakness."

And here he was, a creature out of the past, the living original of a character immortalized by the great novelist, now an invalid propped up with pillows, and waited upon by a devoted daughter-in-law.

To talk with him, if only for a few fleeting minutes, was to breathe the real Dickens atmosphere, for here was a man who spoke as one would expect a Dickens character to speak; an old friend one had learned to love as the guardian and companion of little Pip, who now, as it were, had stepped from the printed page to converse in his own name, the name by which the master had known him—John Cayford.

And he talked quietly, almost reverently, of his visits to Tavistock House, and of his association with the novelist.

"I'm getting old," he said, "and seeing a stranger excites me a good deal and my breathing becomes difficult, but I will tell you what I can about Mr. Dickens."

It was at the smithy, owned by a Mr. Prior, formerly a locksmith and blacksmith in Marchmont Street, Brunswick Square,* that Charles Dickens discovered "Joe Gargery." When the novelist required the services of a locksmith, John Cayford was always sent to him. Indeed, it was well understood at the little forge that Cayford was the only man who should "do the jobs" at Tavistock House.

"I saw a good deal of Mr. Dickens at Tavistock House," said Cayford. "He used to watch me at my work and talk to me by the hour. He always seemed to have plenty of locks that wanted seeing to, and in those days I was smart at my trade."

A coloured miniature of the novelist was put into the old man's hand, and he was asked if he found it easy to recall Dickens's features.

"I should think I do," he said, as he raised himself on his pillow. "He had wonderful blue eyes, and such a kind manner. Yes, and he was so quick to understand a body."

Cayford had seen the figure of Charles Dickens at Madame Tussaud's Exhibition, but he was not at all pleased with it.

* The smithy is still there, but has been rebuilt.

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"Dickens," he said, "always had rough, ragged whiskers, and was never prim and tidy as there represented."

Now there came the story of a fight at the forge, a story which Cayford had often related to Dickens. It was, as a matter of fact, the only fight in which that "mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow" ever indulged, and the story as given by him bears a striking resemblance to that told by the novelist in describing the fight



JOHN CAYFORD, THE ORIGINAL OF "JOE GARGERY," THE BLACKSMITH, IN DICKENS'S "GREAT EXPECTATIONS."

From a recent Photograph specially taken for this article.

between Joe Gargery and the "broad-shouldered, loose-limbed, swarthy" Orlick.

"It was like this, sir," said the old man, "and I will tell it to you just as I many times told it to Mr. Dickens.

"There was at the forge a journeyman named Brooker, a very disagreeable fellow, a man of exceedingly bad quality and treacherous temper. One day we had a few words, and he began to boast of what he could do to me. 'He would knock my head off,' and that sort of thing. At last the men started to laugh, and said I was afraid to stand my ground like a man. Brooker, encouraged by this, struck at me, but still I would not fight. I told the fellow that I was far too strong for him, and that I could give him a sound thrashing. Upon this, he dealt me a heavy blow on the chest, and the men called me a coward."

The old smith paused for a moment, and in the interval one could almost hear the voice of Mrs. Joe reproaching her husband for permitting Orlick to insult her:—

"To hear the names he's giving me! That Orlick! In my own house! Me, a married woman! With my husband standing by! Oh, oh!"

"That settled it," continued the invalid. "I gave two quick strides, seized Brooker with both hands, raised him in the air, and hurled him with all my might to the ground. I did not strike him; there was no need to

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do so, for there he lay, afraid to move lest I should go at him again."

In chapter fifteen of the book Dickens gives us an account of the fight at the forge, but note this—he does not speak of Joe as having *struck* Orlick. He says :—

"Without so much as pulling off their singed and burnt aprons, they went at one another like two giants. But if any man in that neighbourhood could stand up long against Joe, I never saw him. Orlick, as if he had been of no more account than the pale young gentleman, was very soon among the coal-dust, and in no hurry to come out of it."

Brooker was subsequently dismissed from Mr. Prior's employ. He lost his reputation, and in Cayford's words, "went to the dogs."

Does not this suggest the probability of Brooker being the original of Orlick ?

But many years before the fight at the smithy the name of Orlick had impressed itself upon the mind of Cayford, and there is every reason to believe, as I shall endeavour to show, that Dickens first heard of the name "Orlick" from the lips of his locksmith, and that he substituted it for that of Brooker, when he created the "morose journeyman" at Joe's forge.

The real Orlick—one might fairly speak of him thus—was employed with Cayford at a grocer's shop, Cayford at that time being temporarily engaged as an errand boy. He must indeed have been the ideal "strong boy" that one associates with the notice frequently seen in grocers' windows. But the story would, perhaps, be the more interesting in Cayford's own words.

"One day," he said, "we had to take a barrel of soda to Hampstead, and Orlick was sent to help me with the truck. He was a good deal bigger and older than I was, and on the return journey insisted upon being allowed to ride. Everything went well until we came to a hill, and then I started to run, not thinking that there would be any difficulty in pulling up when I wanted to. Away we went, plunging and bounding. Before us was a gate, and into this we crashed, smashing everything to smithereens. Orlick, who pitched on his head, was unconscious for many hours, and I can remember now the terror that came over me when I thought I should be charged with murder."

The old man added that Orlick of the grocer's shop was the only Orlick he had ever known, or of whom he had ever heard.

The linking together of Cayford and Brooker, and again of Cayford and the grocer's boy, strongly supports my theory as to the source from which the name and character of Orlick was derived. And if this is accepted, THE STRAND MAGAZINE will have given to the world, not only a photograph of the original of Joe Gargery, but will also have shown how, in all probability, Charles Dickens adopted the name of Orlick for his journeyman smith because of its association with the boyhood of John Cayford.

"Mr. Dickens frequently visited the Marchmont Street smithy," continued the old man, "and he used to roam about as though he were the proprietor, talking to the men when it pleased him, and closely, and sometimes critically, examining their work."

Cayford went on to tell with great gusto of a visit which Charles Dickens paid to the forge on a morning when they were more than usually busy.

"It was a bustling morning," he began, "and a large piece of iron, at what is known as welding heat, had been taken out of the fire, and was ready for the strikers, when suddenly we noticed that a gentleman dressed in black was coming towards us. It was Mr. Dickens. I shouted to him to stand back, and the men stopped in their work and waited, but he answered, 'I'm all right; don't mind me,' and he didn't move.

"Of course," said the old smith, as if in justification of what followed, "we could not lose the heat, so we set to work. The iron scattered in all directions, and Mr. Dickens's trousers were riddled as if with gun-shot. But it was his own fault," added Cayford, "though I can tell you he didn't much like it."

It was a long time after this incident before Dickens again went to Mr. Prior's, but he continued to see Cayford at Tavistock House.

Late one night, at the time when Dickens was removing to Gad's Hill, the butler was sent to find Cayford. "He was urgently wanted," said the messenger. When Cayford arrived, Charles Dickens, who was in high spirits, conducted him to a recess in the wall, where there was an exceptionally strong cupboard with double doors. It was locked and the key had been lost. He was told to get to work and to open it with dispatch.

"I little thought what I was going to find inside," laughed the old man, "but I afterwards understood why Mr. Dickens was in such a merry mood."

After a deal of coaxing the doors gave way, and there, standing bolt upright, were revealed two human skeletons, one of them being that of an adult.

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"When I moved them the bones rattled," added Cayford, "and Mr. Dickens laughed heartily. He had got up the whole thing as a practical joke."

The joke, however, rather missed fire. Cayford treated the unnerving discovery as if it were a quite ordinary occurrence; indeed, he scarcely even showed surprise. When Dickens questioned him, Cayford answered that he had worked too many times in the vaults at St. Pancras Church to be frightened by mere skeletons in a cupboard.

Before the interview terminated, Cayford said that there was just one other thing which he would like to mention.

"It was Christmas time," said he; "I remember it as if it all happened yesterday, and Mr. Dickens was such a man for Christmas. Some French wine had been sent to him, and through the butler a few of us had got to know about it. In fact, a bottle had come my way. Ah, it was beautiful stuff, sir!"

The old man smacked his lips and his eyes sparkled. He was back again in the days of vigorous manhood. He had bridged the intervening gulf, and, as if oblivious of the presence of a stranger, was again at that never-to-be-forgotten servants' party in the kitchen at Tavistock House. The whole scene was parading itself before him.

"One afternoon—it was a day or so before Christmas—the butler asked me if I would join a little supper-party which the servants were arranging. Of course I went, and we had one of the happiest evenings I have ever spent in my life. But just before the party broke up, Mr. Dickens, who was spending the evening out, returned at an early hour. He let himself in quietly"—here the old man stopped to laugh—"and the first we knew of his arrival was the silent opening of the kitchen door and the master's head peeping inquiringly round the corner. A general stampede followed. I dived under the table, and the other guests hid themselves as best they could. Mr. Dickens at once grasped the situation, and began shouting to the butler. He was trying to appear angry. Presently that individual dragged himself out of a cupboard, and stood trembling before his master. He attempted to make an apology, but Mr. Dickens raised his hand, and stopped him with an abrupt 'Stay, sir, stay!' Then Mr. Dickens commenced to laugh, and he laughed until the tears streamed down his cheeks, and as he turned to go he said to the butler, who by this time had regained a little self-possession, 'Your friends must not leave my roof until they have sampled the French wine, and then, in my name, you must wish them all a very merry Christmas.'



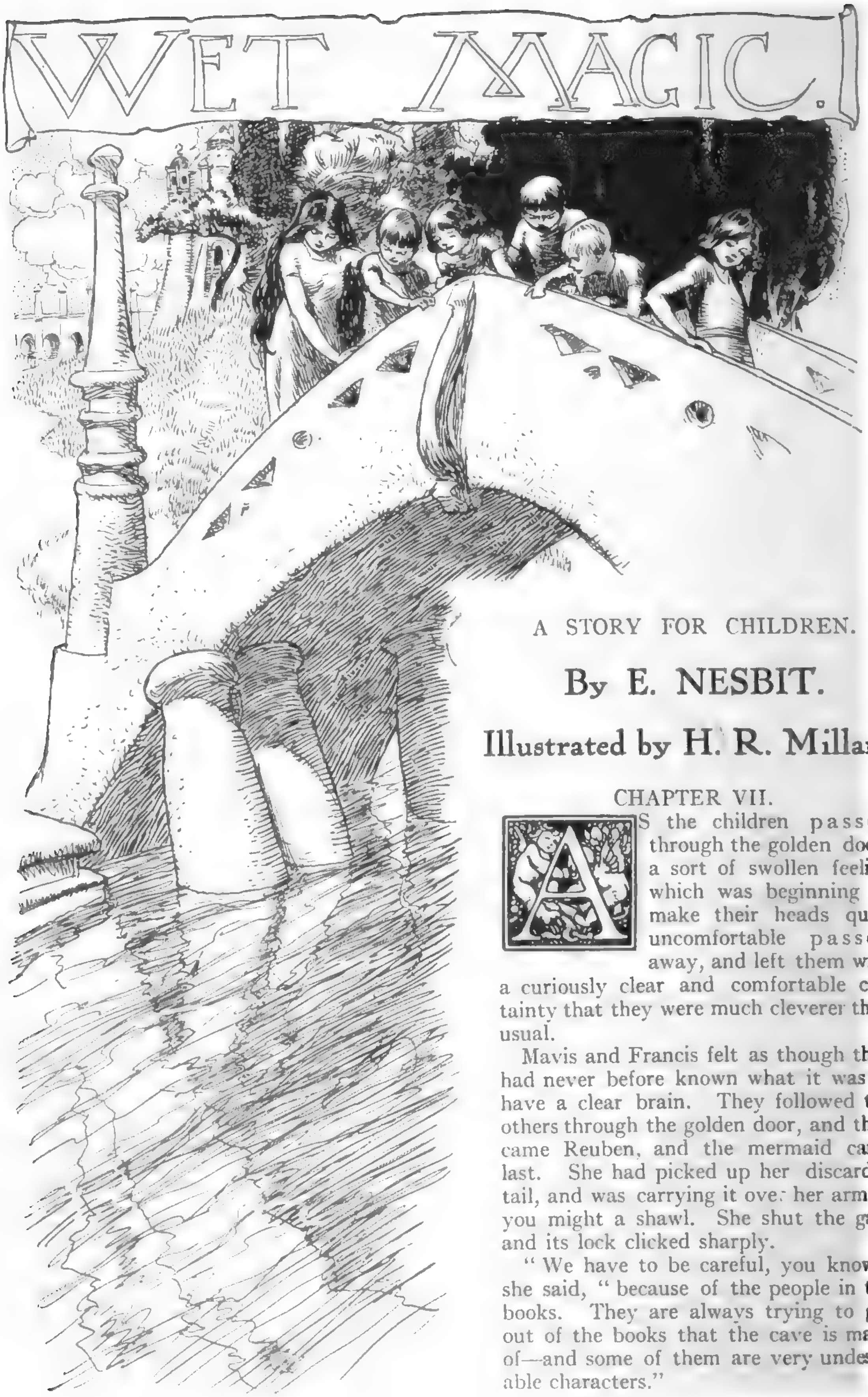
A PORTRAIT OF JOHN CAYFORD TAKEN AT THE TIME HE WAS STILL WORKING AT THE FORGE.

"We didn't deserve it, sir," said the invalid, "but it was just like Mr. Dickens. And," he added, "can you wonder that we all loved him so?"

Charles Dickens removed from Tavistock House in September, 1860, and after that he and Cayford saw nothing of each other. But it is interesting to note that on October 4th of that year the novelist, in writing to a friend from Gad's Hill, said, "I have decided to begin a story. The name is 'Great Expectations'—I think a good name."

And it is throughout this book that we meet with poor old John Cayford, taken by Dickens from the little smithy in Marchmont Street, and given by him to the world in the immortal character of Joe Gargery.

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A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

By E. NESBIT.

Illustrated by H. R. Millar.

CHAPTER VII.

AS the children passed through the golden doors a sort of swollen feeling which was beginning to make their heads quite uncomfortable passed away, and left them with a curiously clear and comfortable certainty that they were much cleverer than usual.

Mavis and Francis felt as though they had never before known what it was to have a clear brain. They followed the others through the golden door, and then came Reuben, and the mermaid came last. She had picked up her discarded tail, and was carrying it over her arm as you might a shawl. She shut the gate and its lock clicked sharply.

"We have to be careful, you know," she said, "because of the people in the books. They are always trying to get out of the books that the cave is made of—and some of them are very undesirable characters."

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The party was now walking along a smooth grassy path, between tall clipped box hedges —at least, they looked like box hedges—but when Mavis stroked the close face of it she found that it was not stiff box, but seaweed.

They came to a little coral bridge over a stream that flowed still and deep.

"But if what we're in is water, what's that?" said Bernard, pointing down.

"Ah, now you're going too deep for me," said the mermaid. "At least, if I were to answer I should go too deep for you. Come on; we shall be late for the banquet."

Here the grassy road widened, and they came on to a terrace of mother-of pearl, very smooth and shining. Pearly steps led down from it into the most beautiful garden you could invent if you tried for a year and a day, with all the loveliest pictures and the most learned books on gardening to help you. And everyone saw, beyond a distant belt of trees, the shining domes and minarets of very beautiful buildings, and far, far away there was a sound of music, so far away that at first they could only hear the music and not the tune.

"Crikey!" said Reuben, speaking suddenly, and for the first time, "ain't it 'evingly neither. Not 'arf," he added, with decision.

"Now," said the mermaid, as they neared the belt of trees, "you are about to be publicly thanked by our queen. You'd rather not? You should have thought of that before. If you will go about doing these noble deeds of rescue you must expect to be thanked. Now, don't forget to bow. And there's nothing to be frightened of."

They passed through the trees and came on a sort of open courtyard in front of a palace of gleaming pearl and gold. There on a silver throne sat the loveliest lady in the world. She wore a starry crown and a gown of green, and golden shoes, and she smiled at them so kindly that they forgot any fear they may have felt. The music ended on a note of piercing sweetness, and in the great hush that followed the children felt themselves gently pushed forward to the foot of the throne. All round was a great crowd, forming a circle about the pearly pavement on which they stood.

The queen rose up in her place and reached towards them the end of her sceptre, where shone a star like those that crowned her.

"Welcome," she said, in a voice far sweeter than the music. "Welcome to our home. You have been kind, you have been brave. You have been unselfish, and all my subjects do homage to you."

At the word the whole of that great crowd bent towards them like bulrushes in the wind, and the queen herself came down the steps of her throne and held out her hands to the children.

A choking feeling in their throats became almost unbearable as those kind hands rested on one head after another.

Then the crowd raised itself and stood upright, and someone called out in a voice like a trumpet:—

"The children saved one of us. *We die in captivity*. Shout for the children! Shout!"

And a roar like the roar of wild waves breaking on rocks went up from the great crowd that stood all about them. There was a fluttering of flags or handkerchiefs, the children could not tell which, and then the voice of their own mermaid saying:—

"There, that's over. And now we shall have the banquet. Sha'n't we, mamma?"

"Yes, my daughter," said the queen.

CHAPTER VIII.

So the mermaid they had rescued was a queen's daughter!

"I didn't know you were a princess," said Mavis, as they followed the queen along a corridor.

"That's why they have made such a fuss, I suppose," said Bernard.

"Oh, no. We should have given the ovation to anyone who had saved any of us from captivity. We love giving ovations."

"May we sit next you at the banquet?" Kathleen asked, suddenly. "Because, you know, it's all rather strange to us."

"Of course, dear," said the sea lady.

The banquet was very magnificent, but they never could remember afterwards what it was that they ate out of the silver dishes and drank out of the golden cups. They none of them forgot the footmen, however, who were dressed in tight-fitting suits of silver scales, with silver fingerless gloves, and a sort of helmet on that made them look less like people than like fish, as Kathleen said.

"But they *are* fish," said the princess, opening her beautiful eyes. "They're the Salmoners, and the one behind mother's chair is the Grand Salmoner. In your country I have heard there are Grand Almoners. We have Grand Salmoners."

"Are all your servants fish?" Mavis asked.

"Of course," said the princess; "but we don't use servants much except for State occasions. Most of our work is done by the lower orders—electric eels most of them. We

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get all the power for our machinery from them."

"How do you do it?" Bernard asked.

"We keep tanks of them," said she, "and you just turn a tap. They're connected up to people's houses, and you connect them with your looms or lathes or whatever you're working."

"It's simply beautiful," said Mavis, warmly. "I mean all this." She waved her hand to the row of white arches through which the green of the garden and the blue of what looked like the sky showed plainly. "And you live down here and do nothing but play all day long! How lovely!"

"You'd soon get tired of play if you did nothing else," said Bernard, wisely. "At least, I know I should. Did you ever make a steam engine?" he asked the princess. "That's what I call work."

"It would be to me," she said; "but don't you know that work is what you have to do and don't like doing? And play's whatever you want to do."

"Then what *do* you do?" Kathleen asked.

"Well, we have to keep all the rivers flowing for one thing—the earthly rivers, I mean—and to see to the rain and snow taps, and to attend to the tides and whirlpools, and open the cages where the winds are kept. Oh, it's no easy business, being a princess in our country, I can tell you, whatever it may be in yours."

At this moment the queen rose, and so did everyone else.

"Come," said the princess, "I must go and take my turn at river filling. Only princesses can do the finest sort of work."

"What is the hardest thing you have to do?" Francis asked, as they walked out into the garden.

"Keeping the sea out of our kingdom," was the answer, "and fighting the Underfolk. We keep the sea out by trying very hard with both hands, inside our minds—and, of course, the sky helps."

"And how do you fight the Underfolk, and who are they?" Bernard wanted to know.

"Why, the thick-headed heavy people who live in the deep sea."

"Different from you?" Kathleen asked.

"My dear child!"

"She means," explained Mavis, "that we didn't know there were any other kind of people in the sea except your kind."

"You know much less about us than we do about you," said the princess. "Of course, there are different nations and tribes, and different customs and dresses and everything. But there are two great divisions down here, the thick-heads and the thin-skins, and we have to fight both of them. The thin-skins live near the surface of the water—frivolous, silly things like nautiluses and flying fish, very pleasant, but deceitful and light-minded. They are very treacherous. The thick-heads live in the cold, deep, dark waters. They are desperate people."

"Do you ever go down there?"

The princess shuddered.

"No," she said, "but we might have to. If the water ever came into our kingdom they would attack us; we should have to drive them out, and then we should have to drive them right down to their own kingdom again. It happened once, in my grandfather's time."

The children's attention had wandered to a tall lady standing on a marble pedestal in the middle of a pool. She held a big vase over her head, and from it poured a thin stream of water. This stream fell in an arch right across the pool into a narrow channel cut in the marble of the square in which they now stood, ran across the square, and disappeared under a dark arch in the face of the rock.

"This," said the princess, "is the source of the Nile, and of all other rivers. And it's my turn now. I must not speak again till my term of source-service is at an end. Do what you will, go where you will. All is yours. Only beware that you do not touch the sky. If once profane hands touch the sky the whole heaven is overwhelmed."

She ran a few steps, jumped, and landed on the marble pedestal without touching the lady who stood there already. Then, with the utmost care, so that the curved arc of water should not be slackened or diverted, she took the vase in her hands, and the other lady in her turn leaped across the pool and stood beside the children, and greeted them kindly.

"I am Maia. My sister has told me all you did for her," she said. "It was I who pinched your foot." And as she spoke they knew the voice that had said, among the seaweed covered rocks at Beachfield, "Save her; we die in captivity."

"What will you do," she asked, "while my sister performs her source-service?"

"Wait, I suppose," said Bernard. "You see, we want to know about going home."

"Didn't you fix a time to be recalled?" asked Maia.

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And when they said no, her beautiful, smiling face suddenly looked grave.

"With whom have you left the charge of speaking the spell of recall?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Bernard. "What spell?"

"The one which enabled me to speak to you that day in the shallows," said Maia.

"No, she didn't. She doesn't know any land people except us. She told me so," said Kathleen.

"Well, is the spell written anywhere?" Maia asked.

"Under a picture," she told her, not knowing that it was also written in the works of Mr. John Milton.



"SHE LANDED ON THE MARBLE PEDESTAL WITHOUT TOUCHING THE LADY WHO STOOD THERE ALREADY."

"Of course, my sister explained to you that the spell which enables us to come at your call is the only one by which you can yourselves return?"

"She didn't," said Mavis.

"Ah, she is young and impulsive. But no doubt she arranged with someone to speak the spell and recall you?"

"Then I am afraid you'll have to wait till someone happens to read what is under the picture," said Maia, kindly.

"But the house is locked up. There's no one there to read anything," Bernard reminded them.

There was a dismal silence. Then:—

"Perhaps burglars will break in and read

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it," suggested Reuben, kindly. "Anyhow, what's the use of kicking up a shine about it? *I* can't see what you want to go back for. It's a little bit of all right here, so it is. I *don't* think. Plucky sight better than anything *I* ever come across. I'm agoin' to enjoy myself, I am, and see all the sights. Miss there said we might."

"Well spoken, indeed," said Maia, smiling at his earnest little face. "That is the true spirit of the explorer."

"But we're not explorers," said Mavis, a little crossly for her. "And we're not so selfish as you think either. Mother will be awfully frightened if we're not home to tea. She'll think we're drowned."

"Well, you *are* drowned," said Maia, brightly. "At least, that's what I believe you land people call it when you come down to us and neglect to arrange to have the spell of return said for you."

"How horrible!" said Mavis. "Oh, Cathy," and she clutched her sister tightly.

"But you needn't *stay* drowned," said the princess. "Someone is sure to say the spell, somehow or other. I assure you that this is true, and then you will go home with the speed of an eel."

They felt somehow, in their bones, that this was true, and it consoled them a little.

"But mother?" said Mavis.

"You don't seem to know much about magic," said Maia, pityingly. "The first principle of magic is that time spent in other worlds doesn't count in your own home. No, I see you don't understand. In your home it's still the same time as it was when you dived into the well in the cave."

"But that's hours ago," said Bernard, and she answered:—

"I know. But your time is not like our time at all."

"What's the difference?"

"I can't explain," said the princess. "You can't compare them any more than you can compare a starlight and a starfish. They're quite, quite different. But the really important thing is that your mother won't be anxious. So now why not enjoy yourselves?"

And all this time the other princess had been holding up the jar which was the source of all the rivers in all the world.

"Won't she be very tired?" asked Reuben.

"Yes—but suppose all the rivers dried up, and she had to know how people were suffering, that would be something much harder to bear than tiredness. Look in the pool and see what she is doing for the world."

They looked, and it was like a coloured cinematograph, and the pictures melted into one another like the old dissolving views that children used to love so before cinematographs were thought of.

They saw the red Indians building their wigwams by the great rivers, and the beavers building their dams across the little rivers; they saw the Egyptians setting their fish-traps by the Nile, and brown girls sending out little golden-lighted love-ships on the Ganges. They saw the splendour of the St. Lawrence and the Medway's pastoral peace. Little streams dappled with sunlight and the shadow of green leaves, and the dark and secret torrents that tear through the underworld in caverns and hidden places. They saw women washing clothes in the Seine, and boys sailing boats on the Serpentine. Naked savages dancing in masks beside tropical streams overshadowed by strange trees and flowers that they did not know, and men in flannels and girls in pink and blue punting in the backwaters of the Thames. They saw Niagara and the Zambesi falls - and all the time the surface of the pool was as smooth as a mirror and the arched stream that was the source of all they saw poured ceaselessly over their heads and fell splashing softly into its little marble channel.

I don't know how long they would have stayed leaning their elbows on the cool parapet and looking down on the changing pictures, but suddenly a trumpet sounded, drums beat, and everyone looked up.

"It's for the review," said Maia, through the rattle of the drums. "Do you care for soldiers?"

"Rather," said Bernard. "But I didn't know you had soldiers."

"We're very proud of our troops," said the princess. "I am colonel of the Lobster Battalion, and my sister commands the Crustacean Brigade, but we're not going on parade to-day."

The sound of drums was drawing nearer.

"This way to the parade-ground," said the princess, leading the way.

They looked at the review through a big arch, and it was like looking into a very big aquarium. The first regiment they saw was, as it happened, the Twenty-Third Lobsters.

If you can imagine a lobster as big as a guardsman, and rather stouter, you will have some idea of the splendid appearance of this regiment. Only don't forget that lobsters in their natural regimentals are not red.

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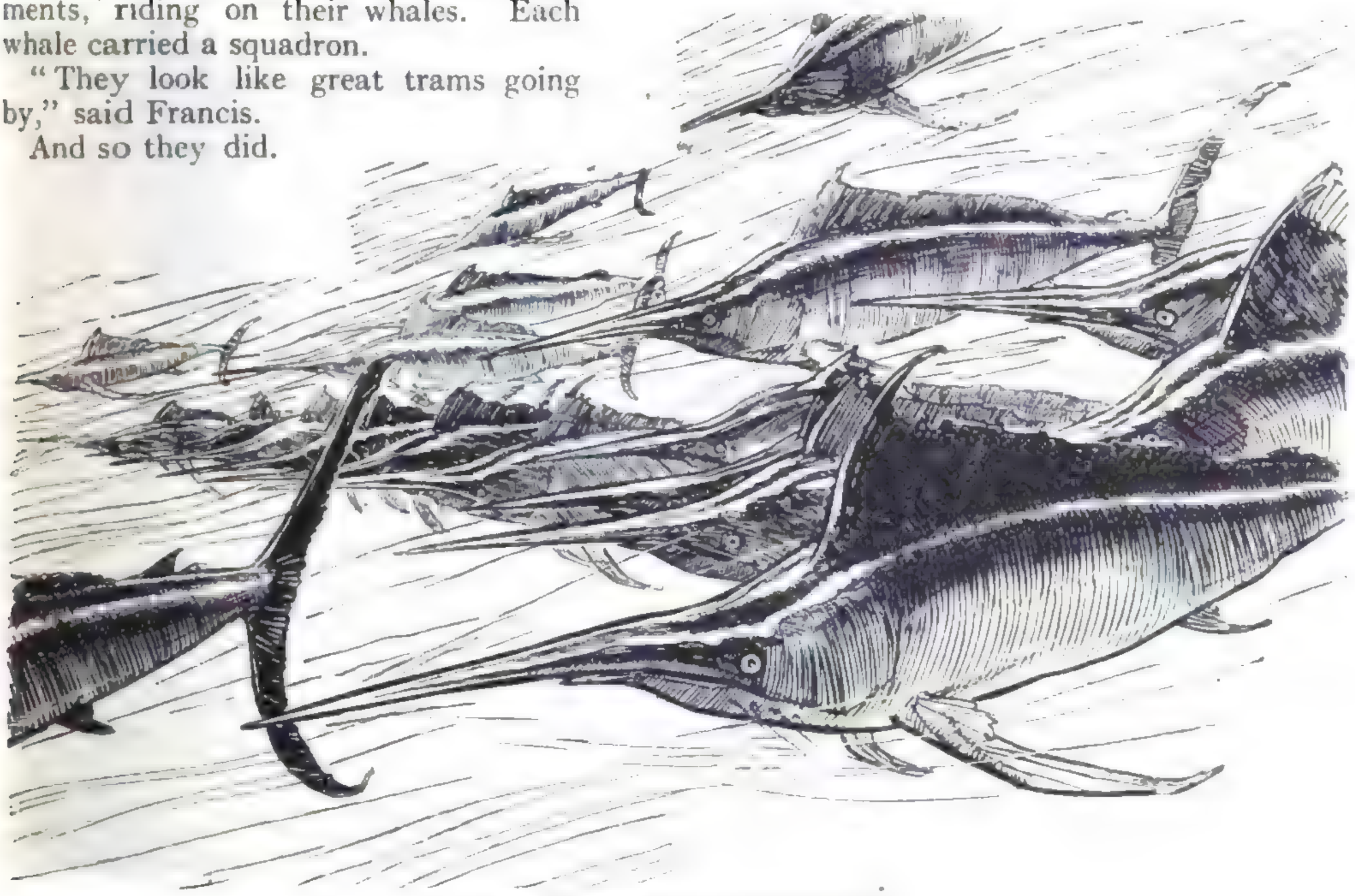
They wear a sort of steel blue armour, and carry arms of dreadful precision. They are terrible fellows, the Twenty-Third, and marched with an air at once proud and confident. Then came the Seventeenth Swordfish, in uniforms of delicate silver, their drawn swords displayed.

The Queen's Own Gurnards were magnificent in pink and silver, with real helmets and spiked collars, and the Boy Scouts—the "Sea Urchins," as they were familiarly called—were the last of the infantry.

Then came Mer-men, mounted on dolphins and sea-horses, and the Cetacean Regiments, riding on their whales. Each whale carried a squadron.

"They look like great trams going by," said Francis.

And so they did.



"THE REGIMENT OF SWORDFISH."

The children remarked that while the infantry walked upright like any other foot soldiers, the cavalry troops seemed to be, with their mounts, suspended in the air about a foot from the ground.

The Household Brigade was perhaps the handsomest. The Grand Salmoner led his silvery soldiers, and the Hundredth Halibuts were evidently the sort of troops to make the foes of anywhere "feel sorry they were born."

It was a glorious review, and when it was over the children found that they had been quite forgetting their desire to get home.

But as the back of the last halibut vanished behind the seaweed trees, the desire came back with full force. Princess Maia had disappeared. Their own princess was, they supposed, still performing her source service.

Suddenly everything seemed to have grown tiresome.

"Oh, I do wish we could go home," said Kathleen. "Couldn't we just find the door and go out?"

"We might *look* for the door," said Bernard, cautiously, "but I don't see how we could get up into the cave again."

"We can swim all right, you know," Mavis reminded them.

"I think it would be pretty low down to go without saying good-bye to the princesses," said Francis. "Still, there's no harm in *looking* for the door."

They did look for the door, and they did not find it. What they did find was a wall, a great grey wall built of solid stones. Above it nothing could be seen but blue sky.

"I do wonder what's on the other side," said Bernard, and someone, I will not say which, said, "Let's climb up and see."

It was easy to climb up, for the big stones had rough edges, and so did not fit very closely, and there was room for a toe here and a hand there. In a minute or two they were all up, but they could not see down on the other side because the wall was about eight feet thick. They walked towards the other edge,

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and still they could not see down—quite close to the edge, and still no seeing.

"It isn't sky at all," said Bernard, suddenly. "It's a sort of dome—tin, I shouldn't wonder, painted to look like sky."

"It can't be," said someone.

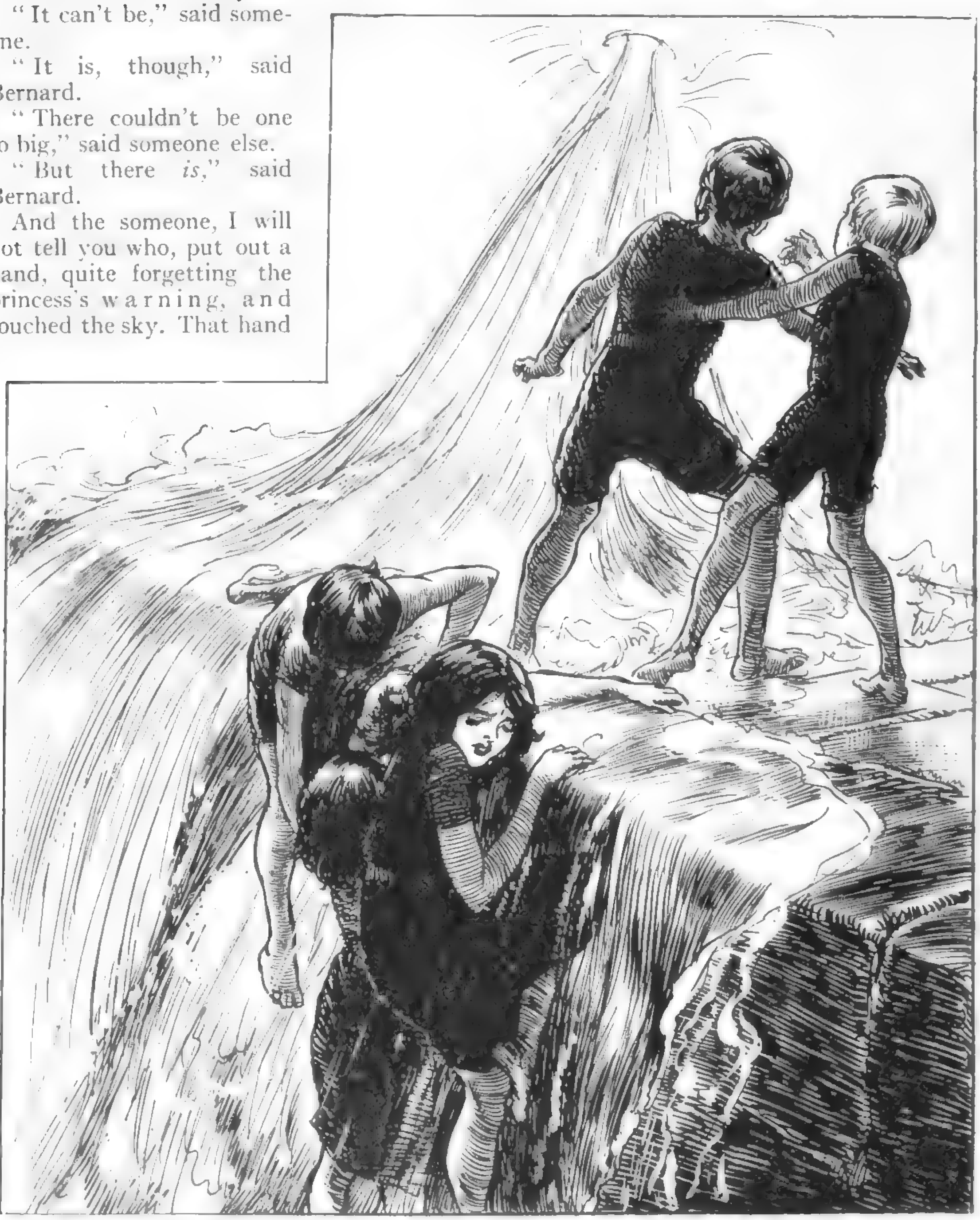
"It is, though," said Bernard.

"There couldn't be one so big," said someone else.

"But there *is*," said Bernard.

And the someone, I will not tell you who, put out a hand, quite forgetting the princess's warning, and touched the sky. That hand whose hand it wasn't, and there was no doubt about it.

It was plain enough now that what they had been living in was *not* water, and that



"THE FIRST RUSH OF THE WATER WAS TERRIBLE."

felt something as faint and as thin as a bubble, and instantly this something broke, and the sea came pouring into the Mer-people's country.

"Now you've done it," said one of those

this was. The first rush of it was terrible, but in less than a moment the whole kingdom was flooded, and then the water became clear and quiet.

The children found no difficulty in breathing

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and it was as easy to walk as it is on land in a high wind. They could not run, but they walked as fast as they could to the place where they had left the princess pouring out the water for all the rivers in all the world.

They found the pedestal, but what had been the pool was only part of the enormous sea, and so was the little marble channel.

The princess was not there, and they began to look for her, more and more anxious and wretched.

"It's all your fault," said Francis to the guilty one who had broken the sky by touching it, and Bernard said, "You shut up, can't you?"

It was a long time before they found their princess, and when they did find her they hardly knew her. She came swimming towards them, and she was wearing her tail, and also a cuirass and helmet of the most beautiful mother-of-pearl, thin scales of it overlapping, and the crest on her helmet was one great pearl, as big as a billiard ball. She carried something over her arm.

"Here you are," she said. "I've been looking for you. The future is full of danger. The water has got in."

"Yes, we noticed that," said Bernard, and Mavis said, "Please, it was us. We touched the sky."

"Will they punish us?" asked Cathy.

"There are no punishments here," said the pearly princess, gravely, "only the consequences of your action. Our great defence against the Underfolk is that thin blue dome which you have broken. Now they may attack us at any moment. I am going to command my troops. Will you come, too?"

"Rather," said Reuben, and the others somewhat less cordially agreed. They cheered up a little when the princess went on.

"It's the only way to make you safe. There are four posts vacant on my staff, and I have brought you the uniforms that go with the appointments." She unfolded five tails, and five little pearl coats like her own, with round pearls for buttons, pearls as big as marbles. "Put these on quickly," she said. "They are enchanted coats, given by Neptune himself to an ancestor of mine. By pressing the third button from the top you can render yourself invisible. The third button below that will make you visible again when you wish it, and the last button of all will enable you to become intangible as well as invisible."

"Intangible?" said Cathie.

"Unfeelable. So you're quite safe."

"But there are only four coats," said Francis.

"That is so," said the princess. "One of you will have to take its chance with the Boy Scouts. Which is it to be?"

Each of the children always said and thought that it meant to say "I will," but somehow or other the person who spoke first was Reuben. The instant the princess had said "be" Reuben shouted "Me!" adding, however, almost at once, "please."

"Right," said the princess, kindly. "Off with you. The Sea Urchins' barracks are behind that rock. Off with you. Here, don't forget your tail. It enables you to be as comfortable in the water as any fish."

Reuben took the tail and hastened away.

"Now," said the princess. And they all began pulling on their tails. It was like putting both your feet into a very large stocking. Then came the mail coats.

"Don't we have swords?" Francis asked, looking down at his slim and silvery extremity.

"Swords? In the Crustacean Brigade? Never forget, children, that you belong to the Princess's Own Oysters. Here are your weapons." She pointed to a heap of large oyster shells as big as Roman shields.

"See," she said, "you hold them this way as a rule. A very powerful spring is released when you hold them *that* way."

"But what do you do with it?" Mavis asked.

"Nip the feet of the enemy," said the princess, "and hold on. Underfolk have no tails. You wait till they are near a rock; then nip a foot with your good weapon, laying the other end on the rock. The oyster-shell will at once attach itself to the rock, and——"

A terrible shout rang out, and the princess stopped.

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" said the children. And the princess shuddered.

Again that shout, the most terrible sound the children had ever heard.

"What is it?" they said again.

The princess drew herself up as if ashamed of her momentary weakness, and said:—

"It is the war-cry of the Underfolk!"

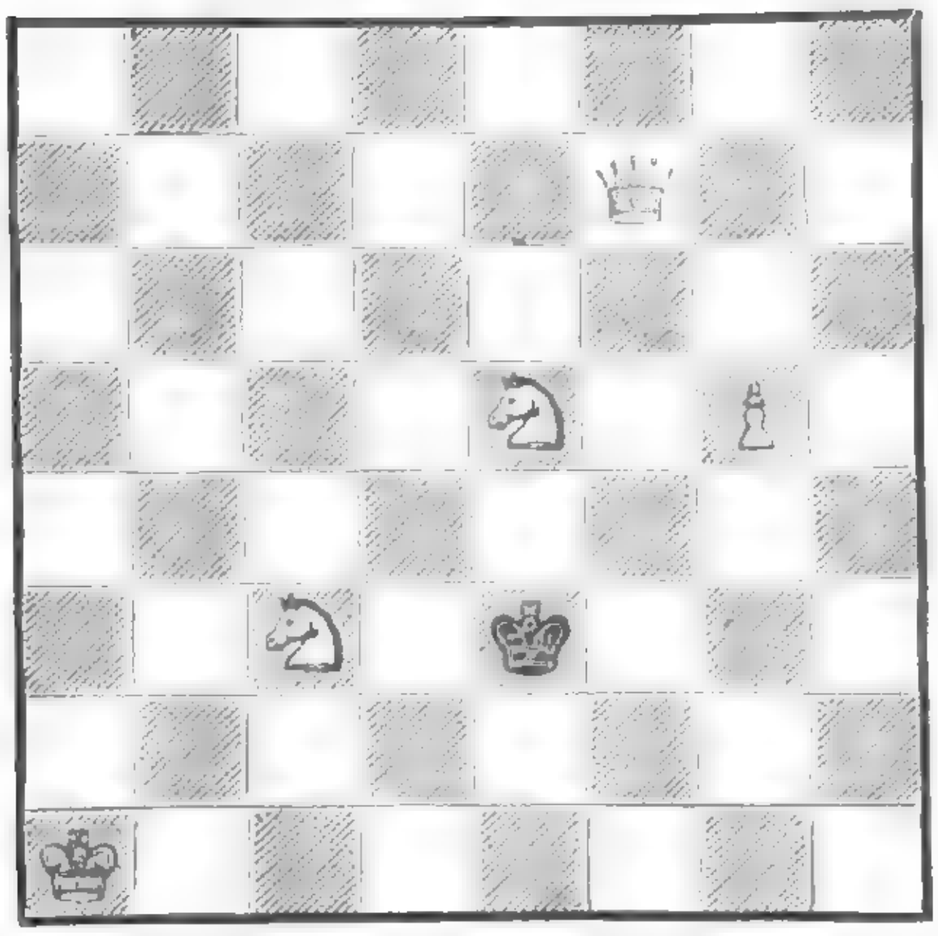
(*To be continued.*)

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An International Chess Problem.

By T. B. ROWLAND.

A COSMOPOLITAN.



Black to play, then White to mate in two moves.

THIS problem is a regular globe-tripper, it having appeared, in one form or another, in almost every country in the world, claiming nationality of each and finding a home everywhere. It is a three-mover with the key-move made, as likewise are all that follow, excepting where otherwise stated. This is in order not to give the solver too heavy a task as well as to focus similarities, and also as a necessary abridgment.

Move the Q up one square, place a Black pawn on Black's Q B 5, and we first have :—

No. 1.—ANGLICAN.

Composers' names will be given with the solutions, with which await some queer surprises for the solver. The board with this, No. 1, on it, turned a quarter to the left, gives :—

No. 2.—WELSH.

The use of the Black pawn appears to be to prevent a dual mate, but it allows a short mate. Remove it and change the White pawn to K Kt 4; then a quarter-turn of the board to the left brings us to :—

No. 3.—SCOTCH.

The positions are only a few of many similar ones, as there is little scope or variety available in portraying the idea. Again give the board a quarter-turn to the left, and there comes in :—

No. 4.—HIBERNIAN.

Bring the Black K down to his Q 6, replace Black P on K B 5, change Q to Q B 8, and our tramp brings us to :—

No. 5.—FRANÇAIS.

A quarter-turn of the board to the right introduces :—

No. 6.—SWISS.

This, without the Black pawn, the White pawn changed to Q Kt 4, and the board again turned a quarter to the right, gives :—

No. 7.—SWEDISH.

Another quarter-turn of the board to the right brings us to :—

No. 8.—SPANISH.

Now remove Black K to his K 6, and change Q to K B 8 :—

No. 9.—CANADIAN.

Change Q to Q R 2, then move the position one square up diagonally to the right :—

No. 10.—MEXICAN.

The dual is avoided without the use of Black P Put White K on K 1 and a White P on Q Kt 2 :—

No. 11.—AMERICAN (U.S.).

Put aside the two White P's, place a White R on Q B 7, and we find our "merry-go-round" the world at :—

No. 12.—RUSSIAN.

Remove the R, place White K on K R 2, Q on K 1, and a Black B on Black's K Kt 3, and we have a change in :—

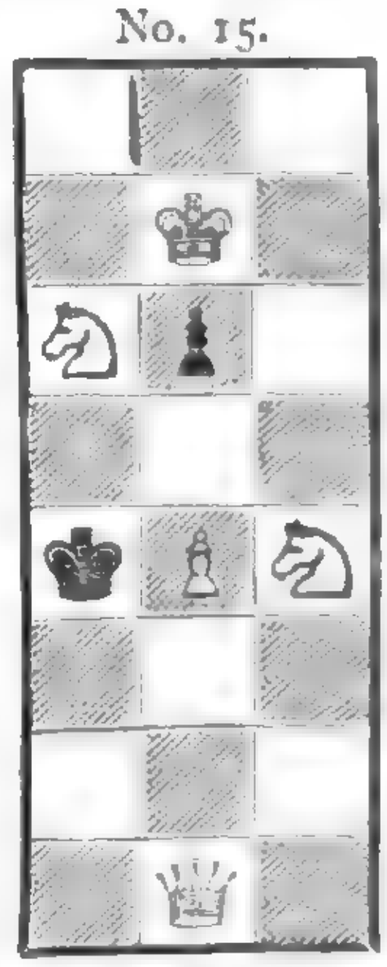
No. 13.—DUTCH.

Exchange the B for a Black P, and we come to :—

No. 14.—NORWEGIAN.

A slight change, as shown on diagram, produces our old friend the "Cul de Sac." Here it is a double form of the idea. Its place on the board is indicated by putting Black K on his K 5. It makes :—

No. 15.



No. 15.—LONDONER.

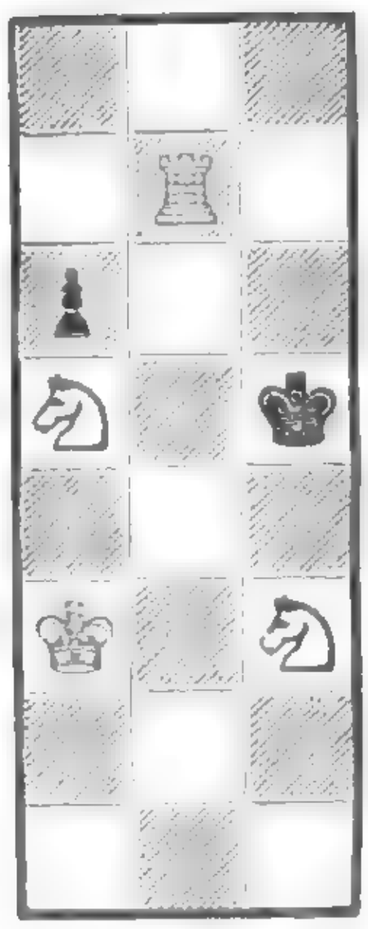
Change White K to K Kt 2, Q to Q 8, White P to K R 6, and Black P to his K 2. Move this position one square to the left, and our traveller brings us to :—

No. 16.—MAURITIUS.

Remove Black K to his K B 3, then bring the position one square down, and we produce :—

No. 17.—NORTHERN ENGLISH.

No. 18.



By exchanging Q for a R, and altering as on next diagram, we make :—

No. 18.—UPPER GERMAN.

The key-move is R to K Kt 7. The Black K occupies his K B 4. Having the position either obverse or reverse, it can be placed on the board in forty different ways! For our next, give the board a quarter-turn to the left :—

No. 19.—BOHEMIAN.

R to Kt 2 solves this. The short mate comes in here similarly to Nos. 2 and 6. Exchange R for Q and arrange as shown on the next diagram :—

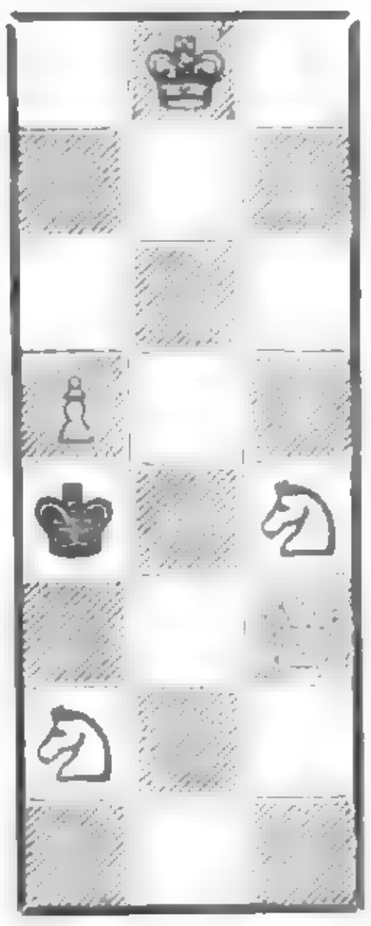
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No 20.—CENTRAL GERMAN.

Here the Black K occupies his Q B 5 square and the other men relatively. Move this position one square to the right, change White K to K R 3, Q to Q Kt 3, P to Q R 3, put a Black P on his K 3, and we have :—

No. 20.



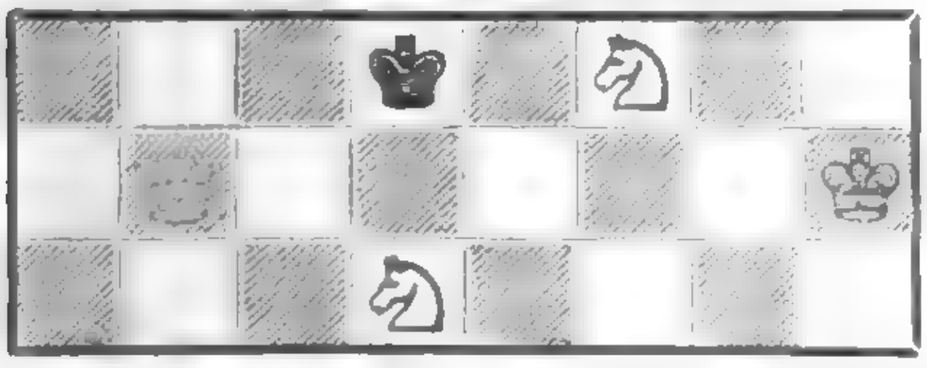
No. 21.—WESTERN ENGLISH.

1. Kt to Q B 4 solves this. Exchange the Black P for a Black Kt, put it on K B 3, and we get :—

No. 22.—EASTERN ENGLISH.

Key the same. Take off the P and Black Kt, move the position down one square, and we come to the easiest problem of the series :—

No. 23.—WEST INDIAN.



This is solved by Q to Q 4, giving a neat, symmetrical solution. Remove White K to K R 4, Q to K B 6, put a White B on K B 8, give the board a quarter-turn to the left, and we arrive at the most difficult problem of all :—

No. 24.—EASTERN ENGLISH.

Change White K to K B 7, exchange B for a White P and place it on K 1, then give the board another quarter-turn to the left, and we have a similarly-built and very good problem in :—

No. 25.—SOUTHERN ENGLISH.

Bring this position down one square diagonally to the right, change White K to K B 2, Q to Q R 6, exchange White P for a Black P, and place it on his K B 3, and our wanderer brings us to :—

No. 26.—MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN.

The key here is, 1. Kt to B 4. We now come to a position with a curious change. White : K at Q R 2, Q at K R 1, Kt's at Q B 4 and K 6, P's at Q R 6 and K Kt 6. Black : K at Q B 3, Kt at K B 6, making :—

No. 27.—DANISH.

Exchange the Black Kt for a Black R, place a Black P on Q R 2, and there you are :—

No. 28.—BRAZILIAN.

The next is a rearrangement of No. 23. White : K at Q Kt 3, Q at K Kt 8, Kt's at Q R 6 and Q B 8. Black K at Q B 3 :—

No. 29.—LOWER GERMAN.

Here, by placing White K at Q R 3, Q at K Kt 8, B at K R 5, Kt's at Q Kt 5 and Q 7 ; Black K at Q Kt 2 and P at Q 4, we are back to the initial idea :—

No. 30.—ITALIAN.

Finally, place the men thus : White—K at K R 3, B at K Kt 1, Kt's at Q Kt 5 and Q 7, P's at Q B 6 and K B 2 ; Black—K at Q R 1, Kt at K R 8, P at K B 6, giving :—

No. 31.—SOUTH AFRICAN.

Many other instances of the setting of Black K and two covering Kt's, as shown, could be given ; but at present we cannot further encroach on valuable space. All are modern constructions.

(*Solutions will be given next month.*)

THE SCOTT POLAR EXPEDITION.

WE have much pleasure in announcing that the complete, fully-illustrated story of the splendid heroism of Captain Scott and his companions will first see the light in this Magazine, and will constitute a feature unique in its thrilling interest, of which the meagre details already published furnish but a faint idea.

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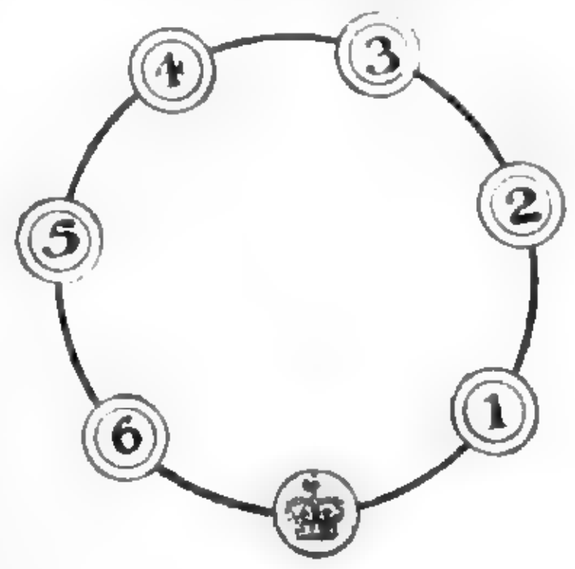
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PERPLEXITIES.

With Some Easy Puzzles for Beginners. By Henry E. Dudeney.

128.—THE REVERSE-WAY PUZZLE.

HERE is a new little puzzle with moving counters that will be found very entertaining, and perhaps call for a certain amount of patience on the part of the uninitiated. Copy the very simple diagram on a sheet of paper and use six numbered counters. Place the counters in the positions shown, leaving the crown disc vacant. The puzzle is to reverse all the six counters so that they are in proper numerical order in the opposite or clockwise direction. You can move any counter to the next vacant disc, or jump over a counter in either direction if the disc beyond is vacant, similar to the moves in the game of draughts. Thus on the first move you can play either 1 or 6 as a simple move, or 2 or 5 as a leaping move. The crown disc must at the end be left vacant. Try to do it in the fewest possible moves.



129.—SIMPLE DIVISION.

SOMETIMES a very simple question in elementary arithmetic will cause a good deal of perplexity. For example, I want to divide the four numbers, 701, 1,059, 1,417, and 2,312, by the largest number possible that will leave the same remainder in every case. How am I to set to work? Of course, by a laborious system of trial one can in time discover the answer, but there is quite a simple method of doing it if you can only find it.

130.—THE NIHILISTS.

AT a recent secret meeting of Nihilists a serious difference of opinion arose. This led to a split, and a certain number left the meeting. "I had half a mind to go myself," said the chairman, "and if I had done so two-thirds of us would have retired." "True," said another member, "but if I had persuaded Bombski and Kuttemoff to remain, we should only have lost one half of our number." Can you tell how many were present at that meeting at the start?

131.—THE SEVEN PIGS.

AN Irishman was shown the sketch of a square pen containing seven pigs reproduced in our illustration. He was asked how he would intersect the pen with three straight fences so as to enclose every pig in a separate sty. In other words, take your pencil and with three straight strokes across the square enclose each pig separately.



The Irishman complained that the pigs would not keep still while he was putting up the fences. It was pointed out to him that for the purposes of the puzzle the pigs were stationary. He answered that pigs were not stationery—they were pork. Being persuaded to make an attempt, he drew three lines, one of which cut through a pig. When told that this was not allowed, he protested that a pig was no use until you cut its throat. "Begorra, if it's bacon ye want without cutting your pig, it will be all gammon." However, he failed to solve the puzzle. Can you do it?

132.—A PARADOX.

FOUR jolly men sat down to play,
And played all night till break of day.
They played for gold and not for fun,
With separate scores for every one.
Yet when they came to square accounts,
They all had made quite fair amounts.
Can you the paradox explain,
If no one lost, how could all gain?

133.—A CHARADE.

MY *first* to us must point, it's clear,
And what I say is true, sir.
My *next* to her your thoughts will steer;
My *whole's* an introducer.

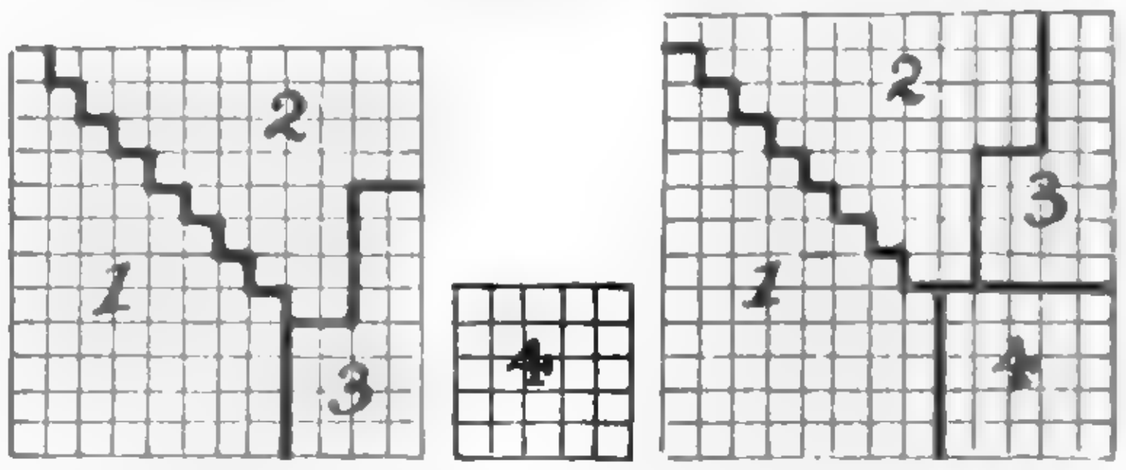
Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

123.—CROSSING THE RIVER.

THE two children row to the opposite shore. One gets out and the other brings the boat back. One soldier rows across; soldier gets out, and boy returns with boat. Thus it takes four crossings to get one man across and the boat brought back. Hence it takes four times 358, or 1,432, journeys to get the officer and his 357 men across the river and the children left in joint possession of their boat.

124.—A PATCHWORK PUZZLE.

THE lady need only unpick the stitches along the dark lines in the larger portion of patchwork, when the four pieces will fit together and form a square, as shown in our illustration.

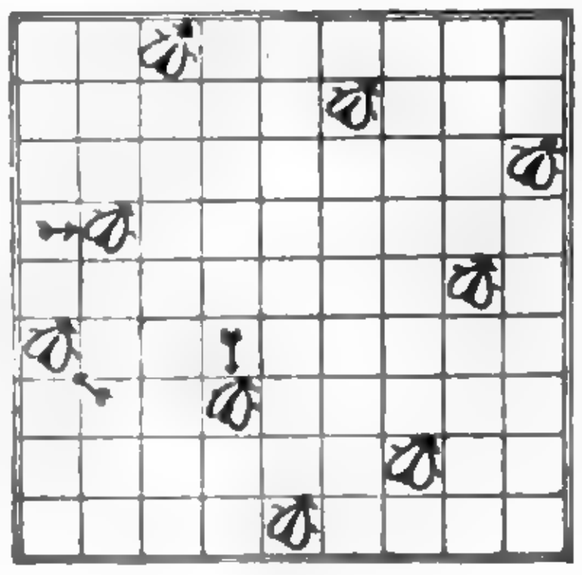


125.—WHEEL—HEEL—EEL.

126.—SEA—SON—ABLE.

127.—FLIES ON WINDOW-PANES.

IN the illustration the three lively flies have taken up new positions, as indicated by the arrows, and still no two flies are in a straight line.



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CURIOSITIES.

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

A GOLF CHAMPION'S MEMORIAL.

ALL lovers of the favourite game of golf will be interested in the accompanying photograph, as it is not often that a game is popularized on a tombstone as in this instance. The monument can be seen



in the cemetery in the Abbey grounds, St. Andrews, Scotland, and the inscription runs as follows :—

"In memory of
'TOMMY,'
Son of Thomas Morris,
who died 25th December, 1875, aged 24 years.

"Deeply regretted by numerous friends and all golfers, he thrice in succession won the champion's belt and held it without rivalry, and yet without envy, his many amiable qualities being no less acknowledged than his golfing achievements.

"This monument has been erected by contributions from sixty golfing societies."

—Mr. J. Rennison, Bookbinding Dept., W. N. Sharpe, Ltd., Listerhills Road, Bradford.

SEEN ONLY BY COWARDS.

A FEW weeks ago I went to the City of Yokkhaici (Japan) on business, and happened to find an enormous crowd of people watching a hobgoblin-like figure, erected in the corner of a street, putting out its red tongue. Its huge body was made of straw, over which were coiled white cotton cloths. The material of its garment was said to be cotton. According to Japanese superstition, there lives in this world such a long-necked hobgoblin, which is always putting out its



tongue, and if any *coward* walks on a solitary path on a rainy, dark night this figure will often be visible to him only.—Mr. Kiyoshi Sakamoto, 19, Tsuji-kuru cho, Yamada, Mie-ken, Japan.

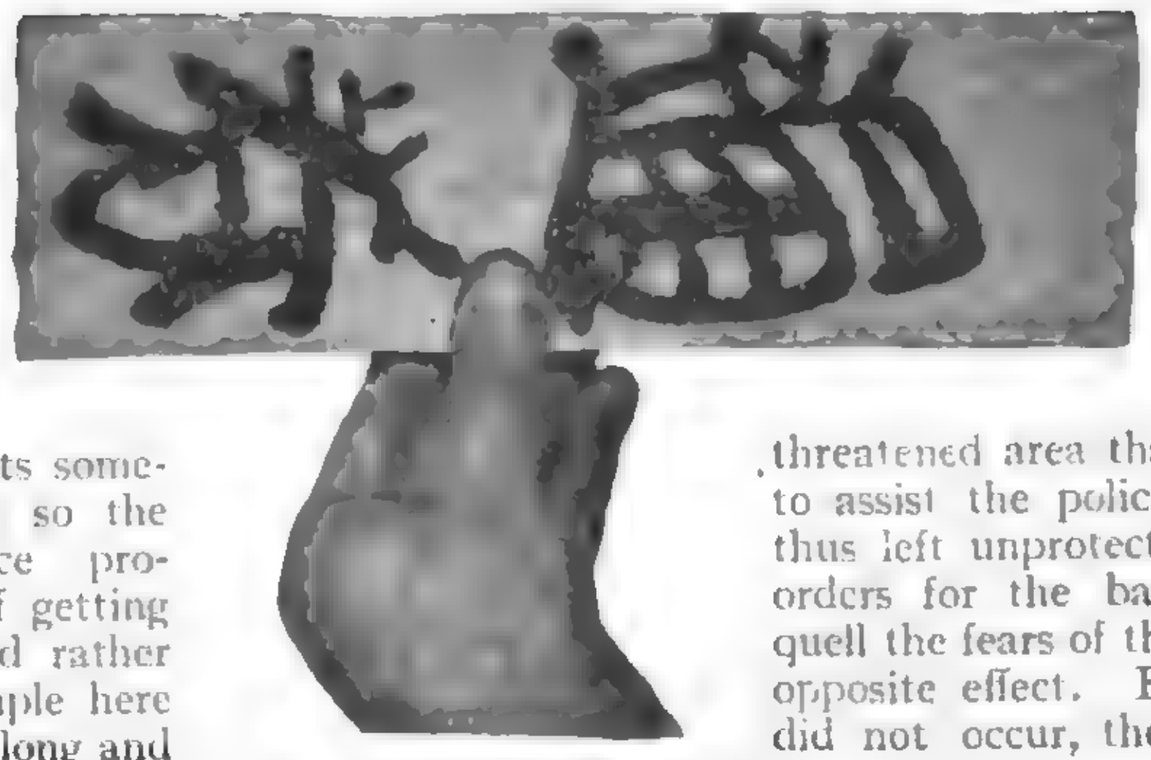
A GOOD LINE.

THE rough little map below shows five places, all of which may be found in the Official Parish Register. These, when read in sequence, form an entertaining and instructive sentence, and one which thousands of people all over the world will heartily endorse. The sentence is : "Newnes STRAND well worth reading."—Mr. R. Davis, 2, Sunnyside, Albert Park Road, Malvern.



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A JAPANESE CINEMA TICKET.



STRIP, paper, or card tickets are not used to a very large extent in Japan. Strip tickets, we are told, have been tried, but with little or no success. The Japanese "man in the street" wants something for his money, and so the theatre and picture-palace proprietors are in the habit of getting tickets from a timber yard rather than a printer. The example here shown measures 11½ inches long and 3½ inches wide; it has painted characters on each side, and the Oriental cheerfully carries this small plank from pay-box to doorkeeper. This ticket was sent me by a friend in Yokohama, who says that it represents nine sen, another sen being charged for taking care of street shoes, which are not worn in the cinema house. —Mr. Richard Penlake, 115, Minard Road, Hither Green, S.E.

"SEATS FOR THE EARTHQUAKE."

THE accompanying ingenious advertisement, which appeared in the *South Pacific Mail*, was suggested by the state of alarm into which the population had been thrown by the prediction of an earthquake made by a certain Captain Cooper, who "foretold" the disastrous one in Valparaiso on the 16th August, 1906. This gentleman gave out that Valparaiso and Santiago, the capital, would be destroyed on the night of the 30th September, between midnight and five a.m., and, as a result, a great panic took possession of the inhabitants. Over four thousand families at Santiago passed the night in tents in the parks, and the city was so depopulated by the numbers who left the threatened area that the soldiers were ordered to assist the police in guarding the property thus left unprotected. The Government gave orders for the bands to play all night, to quell the fears of the people, though it had an opposite effect. Fortunately, the catastrophe did not occur, though a hurricane and heavy rain which fell, being part of the "prophecy," added greatly to the terrors of the unhappy Chilians.—Mr. R. W. Watts, The Bolivia Railway, Antofagasta, Chile.

TERREMOTO, DESTRUCTION and BURNING OF VALPARAISO

September 30th 1912.

The best position from which to witness this great event is

MONTE MAR HOTEL

Which offers unusual facilities to the public for this occasion.

The establishment will

Remain Open all Night

And an excellent hot supper will be served shortly before the critical time. An orchestra will enliven the solemn hours and a Doctor will be in attendance, as also a section of

The Red Cross Ambulance.

The upsetting of the Surrounding Hills and Crashing of the Rocky Coast, and the retiring of the sea with its subsequent inrush will make a most interesting sight for which we make.

NO EXTRA CHARGE

THE MANAGEMENT.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE HAND.

THE curious way illiterate people in India have of communicating and conveying messages to one another is here shown. Notice the four imprints



of a hand on the wagon, meaning in this instance, "All four (members of a family) are alive and send greetings." These markings are usually made in whitening, whitewash, flour, or chalk, and villagers will sometimes walk miles to the nearest railway station to seek for them and eagerly scrutinize trains as they come in, to go away rejoicing, or perhaps in grief, as the message is deciphered. The obliteration of a previous marking on the first panel of the wagon will also be noticed.—Mr. Dave F. Lynch, 10, Creek Row, Calcutta.

Double Dummy Bridge Problem.

BY ERNEST BERGHOLT.

Hearts—Ace, 10, 8, 4.
Diamonds—8, 4.
Spades—Ace, king, 6, 4, 3.
Clubs—6.

Hearts—King, 9, 5.
Diamonds—Ace, 10, 9.
Spades—Queen, knave, 2.
Clubs—Knave, 5, 2.

B
Y Z
A

Hearts—7, 6.
Diamonds—7, 6, 3, 2.
Spades—10, 8, 7, 5.
Clubs—8, 7.

Hearts—Queen, knave, 3, 2.
Diamonds—King, queen, knave, 5.
Spades—9.
Clubs—Ace, king, 9.

Hearts are trumps, and A has the lead. A and B are to win all the twelve tricks against any possible defence.

(The solution will appear next month.)

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"THE STILLNESS AND THE SILENCE OF UNIVERSAL DEATH."

(*See page* 484.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. xlv. MAY, 1913. No. 269.

THE POISON BELT.

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

Illustrated by Harry Rountree.

SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST TWO INSTALMENTS.

Professor Challenger has invited his old friends, Lord John Roxton, Professor Summerlee, and E. D. Malone, to spend a day with him at his home in Sussex, and while journeying down they eagerly discuss the news that a mysterious and universal outbreak of illness has occurred among the natives of Sumatra, and that the lighthouses are all dark in the Straits of Sunda. They are doubly interested in the news as Challenger himself has a letter on the subject in that morning's *Times*. His theory, as he explains when he meets them, is that the world has swum into a stratum, or poison belt, of ether, and that the fate which has befallen the Sumatran natives will quickly overtake the rest of the earth's inhabitants. "It is," he says, "in my opinion, the end of the world." During the morning they learn by telephone that the great shadow is creeping up from the South, leaving in its wake a trail of death—painless but inevitable—over a great portion of the earth. Challenger's home being on an eminence, which, so far, the poisonous vapour has not entirely submerged, he and his friends are able to watch from an upper room, in which they hope to keep the atmosphere pure for a few hours by means of oxygen, the tide of death creeping towards them.

CHAPTER III.—(*continued*).

IN the immediate foreground, beneath our very eyes, was the small yard with the half-cleaned motor-car standing in it. Austin, the chauffeur, had received his final notice at last, for he was sprawling on his back beside the wheel, with a great black bruise upon his forehead where it had struck the step or mud-guard in falling. He still held in his hand the nozzle of the hose with which he had been washing down his machine. A couple of small plane trees stood in the corner of the yard, and underneath them lay several pathetic little balls of fluffy feathers, with tiny feet uplifted. The sweep of Death's scythe had included everything great and small within its swathe.

Over the wall of the yard we looked down upon the winding road, which led to the station. A group of the reapers whom we had seen running from the fields were lying all pellmell, their bodies crossing each other, at the bottom of it. Farther up the nurse-girl lay with her head and shoulders propped against the slope of the grassy bank. She had taken the baby from the perambulator, and it was a motionless bundle of wraps in her arms. Close behind her a tiny patch upon the roadside showed where the little boy was stretched. Still nearer to us was the dead cab-horse kneeling between the shafts. The old driver was hanging over the splash-board

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like some grotesque scarecrow, his arms dangling absurdly in front of him. Through the window we could dimly discern that a young man was seated inside. The door was swinging open, and his hand was grasping the handle, as if he had attempted to leap forth at the last instant. In the middle distance lay the golf links, dotted as they had been in the morning with the dark figures of the golfers, lying motionless upon the grass of the course, or among the heather which skirted it. On one particular green there were eight bodies stretched where a foursome with its caddies had held to their game to the last. No bird flew in the blue vault of heaven, no man or beast moved upon the vast countryside which lay before us. The evening sun shone its peaceful radiance across it, but there brooded over it all the stillness and the silence of universal death—a death in which we were so soon to join. At the present instant that one frail sheet of glass, by holding in the oxygen, shut us off from the fate of all our kind. For a few short hours the knowledge and foresight of one man could preserve our little oasis of life in the vast desert of death, and save us from participation in the common catastrophe. Then the gas would run low, we, too, should lie gasping upon that cherry-coloured boudoir carpet, and the fate of the human race and of all earthly life would be complete. For a long time, in a mood which was too solemn for speech, we looked out at the tragic world.

"There is a house on fire," said Challenger, at last, pointing to a column of smoke which rose above the trees. "There will, I expect, be many such—possibly whole cities in flames—when we consider how many folk may have dropped with lights in their hands. Ah, there you see another on the top of Crowborough Hill. It is the golf clubhouse, or I am mistaken. There is the church clock chiming the hour. It would interest our philosophers to know that man-made mechanism has survived the race who made it."

"By George!" cried Lord John, rising excitedly from his chair. "What's that puff of smoke? It's a train."

We heard the roar of it, and presently it came flying into sight, going at what seemed to me to be a prodigious speed. Whence it had come, or how far, we had no means of knowing. Only by some miracle of luck could it have gone any distance. But now we were to see the terrific end of its career. A train of coal-trucks stood motionless upon the line. We held our breath as the express roared along the same track. The crash was horrible. Engine and carriages piled themselves into a hill of splintered wood and twisted iron. Red spurts of flame flickered up from the wreckage until it was all ablaze. For half an hour we sat with hardly a word, stunned by the stupendous sight.

"Poor, poor people!" cried Mrs. Challenger, at last, clinging with a whimper to her husband's arm.

"My dear, they were no more animate than the coals into which they crashed, or the carbon which they have now become," said Challenger, stroking her hand soothingly. "It was a train of the living when it left Victoria, but it was driven and freighted by the dead long before it reached its fate."

"All over the world the same thing must be going on," said I, as a vision of strange happenings rose before me. "Think of the ships at sea—how they will steam on and on, until the furnaces die down, or until they run full tilt upon some beach. The sailing ships, too—how they will back and fill with their cargoes of dead sailors, while their timbers rot and their joints leak, till one by one they sink below the surface. Perhaps a century hence the Atlantic may still be dotted with the old drifting derelicts."

"And the folk in the coal-mines," said Summerlee, with a dismal chuckle. "If ever geologists should by any chance live upon earth again they will have some strange theories of the existence of man in carboniferous strata."

"I don't profess to know about such things," remarked Lord John, "but it seems to me the earth will be 'To let, empty,' after this. When once our human crowd is wiped off it, how will it ever get on again?"

"The world was empty before," Challenger answered, gravely. "Under laws which in their inception are beyond and above us, it became peopled. Why may the same process not happen again?"

"My dear Challenger, you can't mean that?"

"I am not in the habit, Professor Summerlee, of saying things which I do not mean. The observation is trivial." Out went the beard and down came the eyelids.

"Well, you lived an obstinate dogmatist, and you mean to die one," said Summerlee, sourly.

"And you, sir, have lived an unimaginative obstructionist, and never can hope now to emerge from it."

"Your worst critics will never accuse you of lacking imagination," Summerlee retorted.

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"A VISION OF STRANGE HAPPENINGS."

"Upon my word!" said Lord John. "It would be like you if you used up our last gasp of oxygen in abusing each other. What can it matter whether folk come back or not? It surely won't be in our time."

"In that remark, sir, you betray your own very pronounced limitations," said Challenger, severely. "The true scientific mind is not to be tied down by its own conditions of time and space. It builds itself an observatory erected upon the border line of present, which separates

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the infinite past from the infinite future. From this sure post it makes its sallies even to the beginning and to the end of all things. As to death, the scientific mind dies at its post working in normal and methodic fashion to the end. It disregards so petty a thing as its own physical dissolution as completely as it does all other limitations upon the plane of matter. Am I right, Professor Summerlee ? "

Summerlee grumbled an ungracious assent. "With certain reservations, I agree," said he.

"The ideal scientific mind," continued Challenger—"I put it in the third person rather than appear to be too self-complacent—the ideal scientific mind should be capable of thinking out a point of abstract knowledge in the interval between its owner falling from a balloon and reaching the earth. Men of this strong fibre are needed to form the conquerors of Nature and the bodyguard of truth."

"It strikes me Nature's on top this time," said Lord John, looking out of the window. "I've read some leadin' articles about you gentlemen controllin' her, but she's gettin' a bit of her own back."

"It is but a temporary set-back," said Challenger, with conviction. "The vegetable world has, as you can see, survived. Look at the leaves of that plane tree. The birds are dead, but the plant flourishes. From this vegetable life in pond and in marsh will come, in time, the tiny crawling microscopic slugs which are the pioneers of that great army of life in which for the instant we five have the extraordinary duty of serving as rear-guard. Once the lowest form of life has established itself, the final advent of Man is as certain as the growth of the oak from the acorn. The old circle will swing round once more."

"But the poison ? " I asked. "Will that not nip it in the bud ? "

"It may be a mere stratum or layer in the ether—a mephitic Gulf Stream across that mighty ocean in which we float. Or tolerance may be established, and life accommodate itself to a new condition. The mere fact that with a comparatively small hyper-oxygenation of our blood we can hold out against it is surely a proof in itself that no very great change would be needed to enable animal life to endure it."

The smoking house beyond the trees had burst into flames. We could see the high tongues of fire shooting up into the air.

"It's pretty awful," muttered Lord John, more impressed than I had ever seen him.

"Well, after all, what does it matter ? " I remarked. "The world is dead. Cremation is surely the best burial."

"It would shorten us up if this house went ablaze."

"I foresaw the danger," said Challenger, "and asked my wife to guard against it."

"Everything is quite safe, dear. But my head begins to throb again. What a dreadful atmosphere ! "

"We must change it," said Challenger. He bent over his cylinder of oxygen.

"It's nearly empty," said he. "It has lasted us some three and a half hours. It is now close on eight o'clock. We shall get through the night comfortably. I should expect the end about nine o'clock to-morrow morning. We shall see one sunrise, which shall be all our own."

He turned on his second tube and opened for half a minute the fanlight over the door. Then as the air became perceptibly better, but our own symptoms more acute, he closed it once again.

"By the way," said he, "man does not live upon oxygen alone. It's dinner-time and over. I assure you, gentlemen, that when I invited you to my home and to what I had hoped would be an interesting reunion, I had intended that my kitchen should justify itself. However, we must do what we can. I am sure that you will agree with me that it would be folly to consume our air too rapidly by lighting an oil-stove. I have some small provision of cold meats, bread, and pickles, which, with a couple of bottles of claret, may serve our turn. Thank you, my dear—now as ever you are the queen of managers."

It was indeed wonderful how, with the self-respect and sense of propriety of the British housekeeper, the lady had within a few minutes adorned the central table with a snow-white cloth, laid the napkins upon it, and set forth the simple meal with all the elegance of civilization, including an electric torch lamp in the centre. Wonderful, also, was it to find that our appetites were ravenous.

"It is the measure of our emotion," said Challenger, with that air of condescension with which he brought his scientific mind to the explanation of humble facts. "We have gone through a great crisis. That means molecular disturbance. That in turn means the need for repair. Great sorrow or great joy should bring intense hunger—not abstinence from food, as our novelists will have it."

"That's why the country folk have great feasts at funerals," I hazarded.

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"Exactly. Our young friend has hit upon an excellent illustration. Let me give you another slice of tongue."

"The same with savages," said Lord John, cutting away at the beef. "I've seen them buryin' a chief up the Aruwimi River, and they ate a hippo that must have weighed as much as the tribe. There are some of them down New Guinea way that eat the late-lamented himself, just by way of a last tidy up. Well, of all the funeral feasts on this earth, I suppose the one we are takin' is the queerest."

"The strange thing is," said Mrs. Challenger, "that I find it impossible to feel grief for those who are gone. There are my father and mother at Bedford. I know that they are dead, and yet in this tremendous universal tragedy I can feel no sharp sorrow for any individuals, even for them."

"And my old mother in her cottage in Ireland," said I. "I can see her in my mind's eye, with her shawl and her lace cap, lying back with closed eyes in the old high-backed chair near the window, her glasses and her book beside her. Why should I mourn her? She has passed and I am passing, and I may be nearer her in some other life than England is to Ireland. Yet I grieve to think that that dear body is no more."

"As to the body," remarked Challenger, "we do not mourn over the parings of our nails nor the cut locks of our hair, though they were once part of ourselves. Neither does a one-legged man yearn sentimentally over his missing member. The physical body has rather been a source of pain and fatigue to us. It is our constant index of our limitations. Why then should we worry about its detachment from our psychical selves?"

"If they can indeed be detached," Summerlee grumbled. "But, anyhow, universal death is dreadful."

"As I have already explained," said Challenger, "a universal death must in its nature be far less terrible than an isolated one."

"Same in a battle," remarked Lord John. "If you saw a single man lying on that floor with his chest knocked in and a hole in his face it would turn you sick. But I've seen ten thousand on their backs in the Soudan, and it gave me no such feelin', for when you are makin' history the life of any man is too small a thing to worry over. When a thousand million pass over together, same as happened to-day, you can't pick your own partic'lar out of the crowd."

"I wish it were well over with us," said the lady, wistfully. "Oh, George, I am so frightened."

"You'll be the bravest of us all, little lady, when the time comes. I've been a blusterous old husband to you, dear, but you'll just bear in mind that G. E. C. is as he was made and couldn't help himself. After all, you wouldn't have had anyone else?"

"No one in the whole wide world, dear," said she, and put her arms round his bull neck. We three walked to the window, and stood amazed at the sight which met our eyes.

Darkness had fallen and the dead world was shrouded in gloom. But right across the southern horizon was one long vivid scarlet streak, waxing and waning in vivid pulses of life, leaping suddenly to a crimson zenith and then dying down to a glowing line of fire.

"Lewes is ablaze!" I cried.

"No, it is Brighton which is burning," said Challenger, stepping across to join us. "You can see the curved back of the downs against the glow. That fire is miles on the farther side of it. The whole town must be alight."

There were several red glares at different points, and the pile of *débris* upon the railway line was still smouldering darkly, but they all seemed mere pin-points of light compared to that monstrous conflagration throbbing beyond the hills. What copy it would all have made for the *Gazette!* Had ever a journalist such an opening and so little chance of using it—the scoop of scoops, and no one to appreciate it? And then, suddenly, the old instinct of recording came over me. If these men of science could be so true to their life's work to the very end, why should not I, in my humble way, be as constant? No human eye might ever rest upon what I had done. But the long night had to be passed somehow, and for me, at least, sleep seemed to be out of the question. My notes would help to pass the weary hours and to occupy my thoughts. Thus it is that now I have before me the notebook with its scribbled pages, written confusedly upon my knee in the dim, waning light of our one electric torch. Had I the literary touch, they might have been worthy of the occasion. As it is, they may still serve to bring to other minds the long-drawn emotions and tremors of that awful night.

CHAPTER IV.

A DIARY OF THE DYING.

How strange the words look scribbled at the top of the empty page of my book!

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How stranger still that it is I, Edward Malone, who have written them — I who started only some twelve hours ago from my rooms in Streatham without one thought of the marvels which the day was to bring forth! I look back at the chain of incidents, my interview with McArdle, Challenger's first note of alarm in the *Times*, the absurd journey in the train, the pleasant luncheon, the catastrophe, and now it has come to this—that we linger alone upon an empty planet, and so sure is our fate that I can regard these lines, written from mechanical professional habit, and never to be seen by human eyes, as the words of one who is already dead, so closely does he stand to the shadow borderland over which all outside this one little circle of friends have already gone. I feel how wise and true were the words of Challenger when he said that the real tragedy would be if we were left behind when all that is noble and good and beautiful had passed. But of that there can surely be no danger. Already our second tube of oxygen is drawing to an end. We can count the poor dregs of our lives almost to a minute.

We have just been treated to a lecture, a good quarter of an hour long, from Challenger, who was so excited that he roared and bellowed as if he were addressing his old rows of scientific sceptics in the Queen's Hall. He had certainly a strange audience to harangue: his wife perfectly acquiescent and absolutely ignorant of his meaning, Summerlee seated in the shadow, querulous and critical, but interested, Lord John lounging in a corner somewhat bored by the whole proceeding, and myself beside the window watching the scene with a kind of detached attention as if it were all a dream or something in which I had no personal interest whatever. Challenger sat at the centre table with the electric light illuminating the slide under the microscope which he had brought from his dressing-room. The small vivid circle of white light from the mirror left half of his rugged, bearded face in brilliant radiance, and half in deepest shadow. He had, it seems, been working of late upon the lowest forms of life, and what excited him at the present moment was that in the microscopic slide made up the day before he found the amœba to be still alive.

"You can see it for yourselves," he kept repeating, in great excitement. "Summerlee, will you step across and satisfy yourself upon the point? Malone, will you kindly verify what I say? The little spindle-shaped things in the centre are diatoms, and may be disregarded since they are probably vegetable rather than animal. But at the right-hand side you will see an undoubted amœba, moving sluggishly across the field. The upper screw is the fine adjustment. Look at it for yourselves."

Summerlee did so, and acquiesced. So did I, and perceived a little creature which looked as if it were made of ground glass flowing in a sticky way across the lighted circle. Lord John was prepared to take him on trust.

"I'm not troublin' my head whether he's alive or dead," said he. "We don't so much as know each other by sight, so why should I take it to heart? I don't suppose he's worryin' himself over the state of *our* health."

I laughed at this, and Challenger looked in my direction with his coldest and most supercilious stare. It was a most petrifying experience.

"The flippancy of the half-educated is more obstructive to science than the obtuseness of the ignorant," said he. "If Lord John Roxton would condescend——"

"My dear George, don't be so peppery," said his wife, with her hand on the black mane that drooped over the microscope. "What can it matter whether the amœba is alive or not?"

"It matters a great deal," said Challenger, gruffly.

"Well, let's hear about it," said Lord John, with a good-humoured smile. "We may as well talk about that as anything else. If you think I've been too off-hand with the thing, or hurt its feelin's in any way, I'll apologize."

"For my part," remarked Summerlee, in his creaky, argumentative voice, "I can't see why you should attach such importance to the creature being alive. It is in the same atmosphere as ourselves, so naturally the poison does not act upon it. If it were outside of this room it would be dead, like all other animal life."

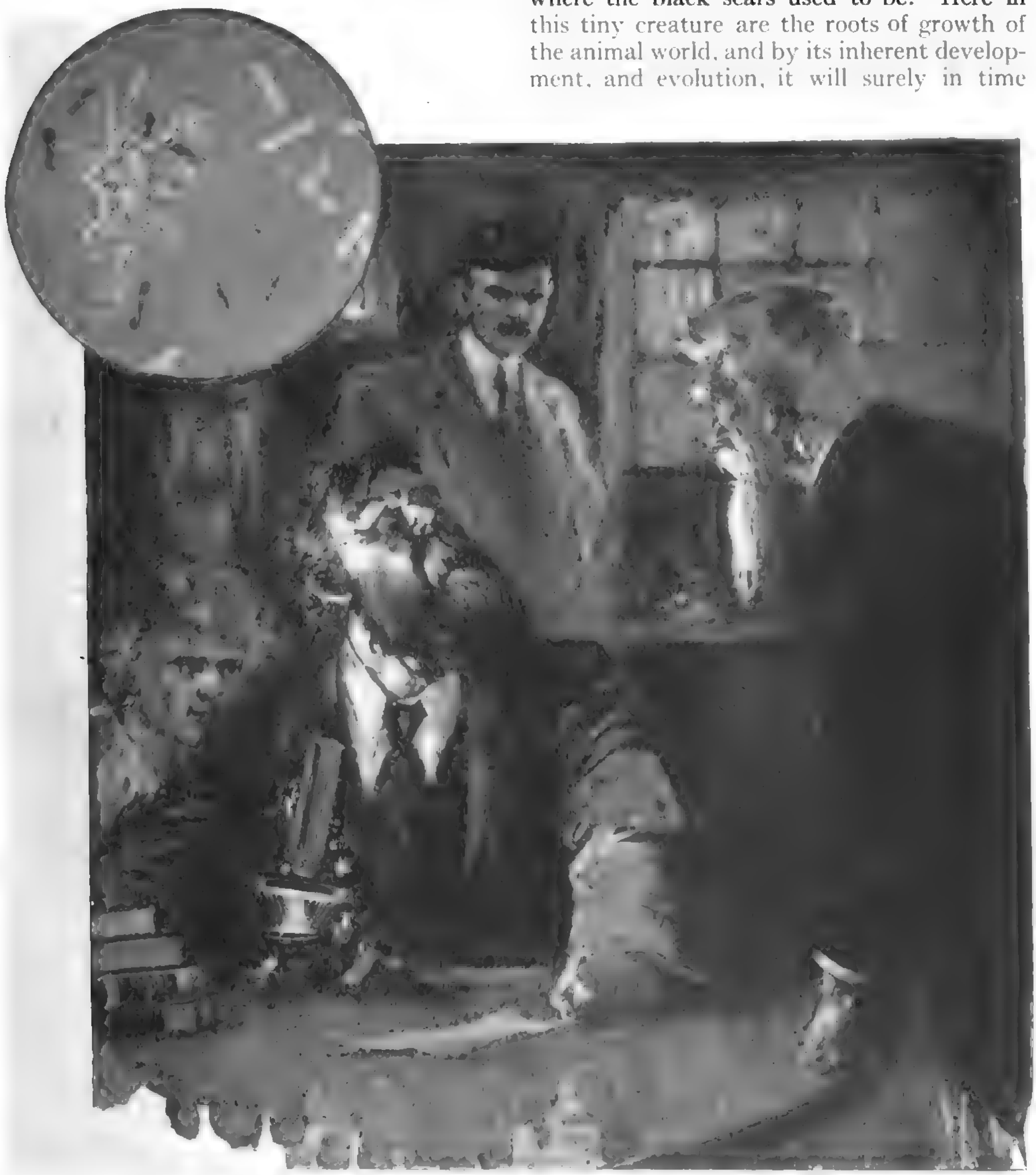
"Your remarks, my good Summerlee," said Challenger, with enormous condescension (oh, if I could paint that overbearing, arrogant face in the vivid circle of reflection from the microscope mirror!)—"your remarks show that you imperfectly appreciate the situation. This specimen was mounted yesterday and is hermetically sealed. None of our oxygen can reach it. But the ether, of course, has penetrated to it, as to every other point upon the universe. Therefore, it has survived the poison. Hence, we may argue that every amœba outside this room, instead of being dead, as you have erroneously stated, has really survived the catastrophe."

"Well, even now I don't feel inclined to

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hip-hurrah about it," said Lord John. "What does it matter?"

"It just matters this, that the world is a living instead of a dead one. If you had the scientific imagination, you would cast your mind forward from this one fact, and you would see some few millions of years hence—a mere passing moment in the enormous flux of the ages—the whole world teeming once more with the animal and human life which will spring from this tiny root. You have seen a prairie fire, where the flames have swept every trace of grass or plant from the surface of the earth and left only a blackened waste. You would think that it must be for ever desert. Yet the roots of growth have been left behind, and when you pass the place a few years hence you can no longer tell where the black scars used to be. Here in this tiny creature are the roots of growth of the animal world, and by its inherent development, and evolution, it will surely in time remove every trace of this incomparable crisis in which we are now involved."



"'YOU CAN SEE IT FOR YOURSELVES, HE KEPT REPEATING.'"

"Dooced interestin'!" said Lord John, lounging across and looking through the microscope. "Funny little chap to hang number one among the family portraits. Got a fine big shirt-stud on him!"

"The dark object is his nucleus," said

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Challenger, with the air of a nurse teaching letters to a baby.

"Well, we needn't feel lonely," said Lord John, laughing. "There's somebody livin' besides us on the earth."

"You seem to take it for granted, Challenger," said Summerlee, "that the object for which this world was created was that it should produce and sustain human life."

"Well, sir, and what object do you suggest?" asked Challenger, bristling at the least hint of contradiction.

"Sometimes I think that it is only the monstrous conceit of mankind which makes him think that all this stage was erected for him to strut upon."

"We cannot be dogmatic about it, but at least without what you have ventured to call monstrous conceit we can surely say that we are the highest thing in Nature."

"The highest of which we have cognizance."

"That, sir, goes without saying."

"Think of all the millions and possibly billions of years that the earth swung empty through space—or, if not empty, at least without a sign or thought of the human race. Think of it, washed by the rain and scorched by the sun, and swept by the wind for those unnumbered ages. Man only came into being yesterday so far as geological time goes. Why, then, should it be taken for granted that all this stupendous preparation was for his benefit?"

"For whose, then—or for what?"

Summerlee shrugged his shoulders.

"How can we tell? For some reason altogether beyond our conception—and man may have been a mere accident, a by-product evolved in the process. It is as if the scum upon the surface of the ocean imagined that the ocean was created in order to produce and sustain it, or a mouse in a cathedral thought that the building was its own proper ordained residence."

I have jotted down the very words of their argument; but now it degenerates into a mere noisy wrangle with much polysyllabic scientific jargon upon each side. It is no doubt a privilege to hear two such brains discuss the highest questions; but as they are in perpetual disagreement plain folk like Lord John and I get little that is positive from the exhibition. They neutralize each other and we are left as they found us. Now the hubbub has ceased, and Summerlee is coiled up in his chair, while Challenger, still fingering the screws of his microscope, is keeping up a continual low, deep, inarticulate growl like the sea after a storm. Lord John comes over to me, and we look out together into the night.

There is a pale new moon—the last moon that human eyes will ever rest upon—and the stars are most brilliant. Even in the clear plateau air of South America I have never seen them brighter. Possibly this etheric change has some effect upon light. The funeral pyre of Brighton is still blazing, and there is a very distant patch of scarlet in the western sky, which may mean trouble at Arundel or Chichester, possibly even at Portsmouth. I sit and muse and make an occasional note. The starlit earth looks a dreamland of gentle beauty. Who would imagine it as the terrible Golgotha strewn with the bodies of the human race? Suddenly, I find myself laughing.

"Halloa, young fellah!" said Lord John, in surprise. "We could do with a joke in these hard times. What was it, then?"

"I was thinking of all the great unsolved questions," I answer; "the questions that we spent so much labour and thought over. Think of Anglo-German competition, for example—or the Persian Gulf that my old chief was so keen about. Whoever would have guessed, when we fumed and fretted so, how they were to be eventually solved?"

We fall into silence again. I fancy that each of us is thinking of friends that have gone before. Mrs. Challenger is sobbing quietly, and her husband is whispering to her. My mind turns to all the most unlikely people, and I see each of them lying white and rigid as poor Austin does in the yard. There is McArdle, for example. I know exactly where he is, with his face upon his writing-desk and his hand on his own telephone, just as I heard him fall. Beaumont, the editor, too—I suppose he is lying upon the blue and red Turkey carpet which adorned his sanctum. And the fellows in the reporters' room—Macdonna and Murray and Bond. They had certainly died hard at work on their job, with note-books full of vivid impressions and strange happenings in their hands. I could just imagine how this one would have been packed off to do the doctors, and that other to Westminster, and yet a third to St. Paul's. What glorious rows of head-lines they must have seen as a last vision beautiful, never destined to materialize in printer's ink! I could see Macdonna among the doctors—"Hope in Harley Street"—Mac had always a weakness for alliteration. "Interview with Mr. Soley Wilson." "Famous Specialist says 'Never despair!'" "Our Special Corre-

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spondent found the eminent scientist seated upon the roof, whither he had retreated to avoid the crowd of terrified patients who had stormed his dwelling. With a manner which plainly showed his appreciation of the immense gravity of the occasion, the celebrated physician refused to admit that every avenue of hope had been closed." That's how Mac would start. Then there was Bond; he would probably do St. Paul's. He fancied his own literary touch. My word, what a theme for him! "Standing in the little gallery under the dome, and looking down upon that packed mass of despairing humanity, grovelling at this last instant before a Power which they had so persistently ignored, there rose to my ears from the swaying crowd such a low moan of entreaty and terror, such a shuddering cry for help to the unknown, that——" and so forth.

Yes, it would be a great end for a reporter, though, like myself, he would die with the treasures still unused. What would Bond not give, poor chap, to see "J. H. B." at the foot of a column like that?

But what drivel I am writing! It is just an attempt to pass the weary time. Mrs. Challenger has gone to the inner dressing-room, and the Professor says that she is asleep. He is making notes and consulting books at the central table, as calmly as if years of placid work lay before him.

Summerlee has dropped off in his chair, and gives from time to time a peculiarly exasperating snore. Lord John lies back with his hands in his pockets, and his eyes closed. How people can sleep under such conditions is more than I can imagine.

Three-thirty a.m. I have just wakened with a start. It was five minutes past eleven when I made my last entry. I remember winding up my watch and noting the time. So I have wasted some five hours out of the little span still left to us. Who would have believed it possible? But I feel very much fresher, and ready for my fate—or try to persuade myself that I am. And yet, the fitter a man is, and the higher his tide of life, the more must he shrink from death. How wise and how merciful is that provision of Nature by which his earthly anchor is usually loosened by many little imperceptible tugs, until his consciousness has drifted out of its untenable earthly harbour into the great sea beyond!

Mrs. Challenger is still in the dressing-room. Challenger has fallen asleep in his chair. What a picture! His enormous frame leans back, his huge, hairy hands are clasped across his waistcoat, and his head is so tilted that I can see nothing above his collar save a tangled bristle of luxuriant beard. He shakes with the vibration of his own snoring. Summerlee adds his occasional high tenor to Challenger's sonorous bass. Lord John is sleeping also, his long body doubled up sideways in a basket-chair. The first cold light of dawn is just stealing into the room, and everything is grey and mournful.

I look out at the sunrise—that fateful sunrise which will shine upon an unpeopled world. The human race is gone, extinguished in a day, but the planets swing round and the tides rise or fall, and the wind whispers, and all Nature goes her way, down as it would seem, to the very amœba, with never a sign that he who styled himself the lord of creation had ever blessed or cursed the universe with his presence. Down in the yard lies Austin with sprawling limbs, his face glimmering white in the dawn, and the hose-nozzle still projecting from his dead hand. The whole of human kind is typified in that one half-ludicrous and half-pathetic figure, lying so helpless beside the machine which it used to control.

Here end the notes which I made at the time. Henceforward events were too swift and too poignant to allow me to write, but they are too clearly outlined in my memory that any detail could escape me.

Some chokiness in my throat made me look at the oxygen cylinders, and I was startled at what I saw. The sands of our lives were running very low. At some period in the night Challenger had switched the tube from the third to the fourth cylinder. Now it was clear that this also was nearly exhausted. That horrible feeling of constriction was closing in upon me. I ran across and, unscrewing the nozzle, I changed it to our last supply. Even as I did so my conscience pricked me, for I felt that perhaps if I had held my hand all of them might have passed in their sleep. The thought was banished, however, by the voice of the lady from the inner room, crying—

"George, George, I am stifling!"

"It is all right, Mrs. Challenger," I answered, as the others started to their feet. "I have just turned on a fresh supply."

Even at such a moment I could not help smiling at Challenger, who with a great hairy fist in each eye was like a huge, bearded baby, new wakened out of sleep. Summerlee was shivering like a man with the ague, human fears, as he realized his position, rising for an instant above the

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stoicism of the man of science. Lord John, however, was as cool and alert as if he had just been roused on a hunting morning.

"Fifthly and lastly," said he, glancing at the tube. "Say, young fellah, don't tell me you've been writin' up your impressions in that paper on your knee."

"Just a few notes to pass the time."

"Well, I don't believe anyone but an Irishman would have done that. I expect you'll have to wait till little brother amœba gets grown up before you'll find a reader. He don't seem to take much stock of things just at present. Well, Herr Professor, what are the prospects?"

Challenger was looking out at the great drifts of morning mist which lay over the landscape. Here and there the wooded hills rose like conical islands out of this woolly sea.

"It might be a winding-sheet," said Mrs. Challenger, who had entered in her dressing-gown. "There's that song of yours, George, 'Ring out the old, ring in the new.' It was prophetic. But you are shivering, my poor dear friends. I have been warm under a coverlet all night, and you cold in your chairs. But I'll soon set you right."

The brave little creature hurried away, and presently we heard the sizzling of a kettle. She was back soon with five steaming cups of cocoa upon a tray.

"Drink these," said she. "You will feel so much better."

And we did. Summerlee asked if he might light his pipe, and we all had cigarettes. It steadied our nerves, I think, but it was a mistake, for it made a dreadful atmosphere in that stuffy room. Challenger had to open the ventilator.

"How long, Challenger?" asked Lord John.

"Possibly three hours," he answered, with a shrug.

"I used to be frightened," said his wife. "But the nearer I get to it, the easier it seems. Don't you think we ought to pray, George?"

"You will pray, dear, if you wish," the big man answered, very gently. "We all have our own ways of praying. Mine is a complete acquiescence in whatever Fate may send me—a cheerful acquiescence. The highest religion and the highest science seem to unite on that."

"I cannot truthfully describe my mental attitude as acquiescence, and far less cheerful acquiescence," grumbled Summerlee, over his pipe. "I submit because I have to. I confess that I should have liked another year of life to finish my classification of the chalk fossils."

"Your unfinished work is a small thing," said Challenger, pompously, "when weighed against the fact that my own *magnum opus*, 'The Ladder of Life,' is still in the first stages. My brain, my reading, my experience—in fact, my whole unique equipment—were to be condensed into that epoch-making volume. And yet, as I say, I acquiesce."

"I expect we've all left some loose ends stickin' out," said Lord John. "What are yours, young fellah?"

"I was working at a book of verses," I answered.

"Well, the world has escaped that, anyhow," said Lord John. "There's always compensation somewhere if you grope around."

"What about you?" I asked.

"Well, it just so happens, that I was tidied up and ready. I'd promised Merivale to go to Tibet for a snow-leopard in the spring. But it's hard on you, Mrs. Challenger, when you have just built up this pretty home."

"Where George is, there is my home. But, oh, what would I not give for one last walk together in the fresh morning air upon those beautiful downs!"

Our hearts re-echoed her words. The sun had burst through the gauzy mists which veiled it, and the whole broad Weald was washed in golden light. Sitting in our dark and poisonous atmosphere, that glorious, clean, windswept country-side seemed a very dream of beauty. Mrs. Challenger held her hands stretched out to it in her longing. We drew up chairs and sat in a semicircle in the window. The atmosphere was already very close. It seemed to me that the shadows of death were drawing in upon us—the last of our race. It was like an invisible curtain closing down upon every side.

"That cylinder is not lastin' too well," said Lord John, with a long gasp for breath.

"The amount contained is variable," said Challenger, "depending upon the pressure and care with which it has been bottled. I am inclined to agree with you, Roxton, that this one is defective."

"So we are to be cheated out of the last hour of our lives," Summerlee remarked, bitterly. "An excellent final illustration of the sordid age in which we have lived. Well, Challenger, now is your time if you wish to study the subjective phenomena of physical dissolution."

"Sit on the stool at my knee and give me your hand," said Challenger to his wife. "I think, my friends, that a further delay in this insufferable atmosphere is hardly advisable. You would not desire it, dear, would you?"

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"HE HURLED THE FIELD-GLASS THROUGH THE WINDOW."

His wife gave a little groan and sank her face against his leg.

"I've seen the folk bathin' in the Serpentine in winter," said Lord John. "When the rest are in, you see one or two shiverin' on the bank, envyin' the others that have taken the plunge. It's the last that have the worst of it. I'm all for a header and have done with it."

"You would open the window and face the ether?"

"Better be poisoned than stifled."

Summerlee nodded his reluctant acquiescence, and held out his thin hand to Challenger.

"We've had our quarrels in our time, but that's all over," said he. "We were good friends and had a respect for each other under the surface. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, young fellah!" said Lord John. "The window's plastered up. You can't open it."

Challenger stooped and raised his wife, pressing her to his breast, while she threw her arms round his neck.

"Give me that field-glass, Malone," said he, gravely.

I handed it to him.

"Into the hands of the Power that made us we render ourselves again!" he shouted in his voice of thunder, and at the words he hurled the field-glass through the window.

Full in our flushed faces, before the last tinkle of falling fragments had died away, there came the wholesome breath of the wind, blowing strong and sweet.

I don't know how long we sat in amazed silence. Then, as in a dream, I heard Challenger's voice once more.

"We are back in normal conditions," he cried. "The world has cleared the poison belt, but we alone of all mankind are saved."

(*To be continued.*)

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Arts and the Artful.

Extracts from the Note-book of a Collector.

By
F. FRANKFORT MOORE.

Illustrated by Dudley Hardy, R.I.

A GOOD many people are of the opinion that art and the appreciation of art are making considerable progress in this country, but others (I am one of them) are now and then inclined to be despondent on this subject. What I think is the most disappointing feature in connection with the development of art in the provinces is the lack of interest shown in certain districts in local productions.

Quite recently a striking instance of this peculiarity occurred in a southern town. A local artist held a sale exhibition of water-colour drawings of scenes within a radius of six miles. There were, perhaps, thirty of these, and every one of them was good, and every one of them was pleasing. There was no suggestion of slovenliness about any, nor was there a hint of an amateur. They were not the sort of drawings that might be referred to as "highly creditable." Nobody wants to possess "highly creditable" things; they must have positive merit, without requiring one to take into consideration the conditions under which they are done, before anyone who knows anything about art would wish to possess them; and the water-colours in this exhibition could certainly claim to be regarded in this light.

Well, cards of invitation were sent to some hundreds of possible buyers and were heartily responded to, for free exhibitions are very popular in that neighbourhood, especially those that take the form of a demonstration of a new breakfast cereal (with samples gratis). But in the matter of sales the response was not quite so hearty as it might have been. The artist did not clear ten pounds during the fortnight that his exhibition remained open.

A month or two later, however, a stranger exhibited a collection of his drawings in the same town, and although they were infinitely inferior in almost every way to those of the local man, they found quite a satisfactory number of purchasers, notwithstanding the fact that there was not a drawing that was not priced at more than double the sum asked by the local artist for his sketches.

But before the end of the summer an opportunity was given to connoisseurs in the same town to acquire, at the expenditure of a few pounds, a collection of pictures that would do credit to any private gallery in the kingdom. Announcements appeared placarded on every dead wall that "by Order of the Sheriff" a magnificent collection of paintings by Turner, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Lawrence, George Morland, David Cox, and numerous other masters, as well as drawings by Birket Foster, Keeley Halswelle, George Cattermole, and a host of others, was for disposal. Being a sheriff's sale, this superb collection was to be disposed of without

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"A STRANGER EXHIBITED A COLLECTION OF HIS DRAWINGS IN THE SAME TOWN."

reserve, and the pictures were to be on view in the spacious commercial-room of an hotel.

People flocked to the place where these treasures were hung, and as a knowledge of pictures is born with most people, they were not slow to appreciate the fact that at last a chance had come to acquire at a merely nominal cost pictures by artists of world-wide fame. Most persons had read of the enormous prices brought by some prints after pictures by George Morland, but here were the actual pictures themselves, and in frames of the finest Dutch-metal into the bargain—no frames protected the high-priced prints in Christie's. And not merely was Morland highly represented here, but quite half-a-dozen exquisite *genre* pictures by Josef Israels were to be seen in a row, and it was whispered among the cognoscenti that this painter had just died, and the *Studio* had contained a eulogistic article, with illustrations, on his work. Another chance! Of course, Sidney Cooper's "Cows in Canterbury Meadows" spoke for itself. Every tyro knew that no one could ever paint cattle like Sidney Cooper. And Birket Foster—no one could ever approach Birket Foster in showing children swinging on a gate. There was the gate, sure enough, and the children, and the pet lamb—all the genuine Birket Foster properties. And "by Order of the Sheriff."

It was a treat to see the cognoscenti examining the pictures, subjecting individual works to the severest tests of light and magnifying glasses, and then whispering gravely together in corners on the subject of their merits. Some of them had pencils which they pressed to their lips while they scrutinized the masterpieces, preparatory to making notes on their catalogues—all just like a London picture sale in King Street, St. James's Street, London, W.



"THE COGNOSCENTI EXAMINING THE PICTURES."

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And then some fool came into the room and laughed. He was a man who pretended to know a lot about pictures, and he was usually disposed to question the authenticity of things in the possession of everybody but himself. He glanced around the walls, and went away, still laughing, after being in the place no longer than three minutes.

That was a trick on his part, the cognoscenti said. He wished to put them off buying and so make a haul for himself.

They were confirmed in this belief when the one dealer in the town told a gentleman who had come to him with a commission to purchase some of the pictures, that the man had just been to caution him against buying any of them on his own account.



"SOME FOOL CAME INTO THE ROOM AND LAUGHED."

"He said that they are being hawked round from town to town and that they are really all fakes—that there is not a genuine picture among the lot, and that the sheriff's sale is not a *bonâ fide* one, but one of the oldest tricks of picture fakers."

But the knowing person said to the dealer:—

"Does he mean to say that in a town like this any man would dare to put 'by Order of the Sheriff' at the top of the bill if it was not *bonâ fide?* He would pretty soon find himself in trouble. You attend the auction and bid for the numbers that I have marked in the catalogue."

The auction came off, and was largely attended by the public, but strange to say by not a single outside dealer, only by the local one who had received many commissions; although a fortnight before, an ordinary sale at a private house in the town at which half-a-dozen pictures by fourth-class artists and some only "attributed to" these artists, drew dealers from places fifty and sixty miles away!

It seemed pretty clear that the sheriff had not taken a great deal of trouble to advertise this particular sale. He could not have given it his personal attention, or perhaps he had never before had a chance of handling the "fine arts" on so opulent a scale, or the dealers would certainly not have missed the chance of their lives.

However this may be, the pictures were bought by the dozen, as much as six pounds being given for each of the Israels, and a pair of Birket Foster's fetching ten, frames included in all cases. There was a keen struggle for the Turner, and it was run up to nine pounds—not by any means too much for a Turner as things go nowadays. Altogether I suppose about fifty pictures were sold. At the evening sale the auctioneer announced that a sufficient number had been disposed of to satisfy the sheriff's claim, but that a gentleman in the trade had bought the remainder *en bloc* and instructed him to put them all up for sale to the highest bidder, and he would have great pleasure in carrying out his instructions. On went the bidding down to the last lot, and so ended a memorable picture sale — probably the last of the kind to be perpetrated in England, for within a month the gentlemen under whose direction the enterprise had been carried on from place to place for several years were arrested, tried, and convicted of perjury in making an affidavit with intent to deceive the sheriff of some county and cause him to issue his writ for the sale of their bogus pictures. Fifteen months' imprisonment was certainly not too long a sentence for these practitioners; though really one can have but little sympathy with people who are such fools as to expect to buy pictures with a name value of thousand of pounds for a few shillings.

But for a few weeks after the sale the fortunate purchasers of the bogus masterpieces lost no opportunity of exhibiting their treasures. Teas and "at homes" were given

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to enable their less alert friends to appreciate the varied charms of the masterpieces, for it was understood in the town that the educational value of great works of art should not be neglected, and at the mayor's reception a short time afterwards two of the pictures were exhibited for the educational benefit of the company, in their original Dutch-metal frames —the sort that one may buy for half a crown in a cash chemist's.

In these days the man who had laughed at the private view was referred to in accents of scorn. But he continued to laugh, even when, in the most kindly spirit, he was advised by one of the successful bidders to remember that it was distinctly slanderous to suggest that a sale conducted under the auspices of the sheriff of the county was a bogus affair. Then it was that the critic laughed loudest, and so far as I can gather he is laughing still.

One interesting point was brought out at the trial of the men. It was in respect of the actual manufacturer's price of the fraudulent pictures. The artist who had executed them was put into the box, and stated that he received from five to fifteen shillings for each. The average trade price of a George Morland worked out at a fraction over seven shillings, so that to refer to these works as valueless would be wrong. The purchasers who were fortunate enough to secure good specimens of George Morland at the sale have the satisfaction of dwelling upon their varied beauties and reflecting that the actual value of each work is in the bogus market something between seven shillings and seven and twopence! (The sheriff's auction price of a Morland was six pounds.)

I was once present at a picture sale in a mansion some miles from a country town in which I lived. There were, I think, three full-length Gainsboroughs, five Reynoldses, a few Hoppners, two by Peters, and three or four by Northcote. I was standing in front of a man by the first-named painter, and was lost in admiration of the firm way in which the figure was placed on the floor in the picture, when a local dealer approached, saying :—

"Might I have a word with you, sir?"

Of course, I told him to talk away. I knew the man very well. He was one of those useful dealers of the variety known as "general," from whom one may occasionally buy a Spode plate worth ten shillings for three, or an odd ormolu mount for sixpence.

"We want to know if you believe these to be genuine pictures, sir," said he.

"Genuine pictures!" I repeated, being rather puzzled to know just what he meant, but then I remembered that he was accustomed to attend sales where pictures labelled "Reynolds," "Gainsborough," "Murillo," "Moroni," and so forth were sold for whatever they might fetch—usually from fifteen shillings to a pound, the word "genuine" never being so much as breathed by anyone. When I recollected this I laughed and said :—

"Make your mind easy. If these are not genuine pictures, you will never see any come under the hammer."

"And what do you think they will fetch?" he inquired.

"I could not give you the slightest idea," I replied. "But if you can get me that one in front of us for five hundred pounds, I'll give you twenty-five per cent. commission."

He was staggered.

"Five hundred!" he cried. "You must be joking, sir."



"THE ARTIST WHO HAD EXECUTED THE PICTURES."

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"'WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY WILL FETCH?' HE INQUIRED."

"I admit it," said I. "I should have said a thousand."

"But really, sir, how far would we be safe to go for them all? There are four of us here, and we are ready to make a dash for them if we had your opinion about them."

"Look here, my good man," said I. "You may reckon on my giving you five hundred pounds for any picture in this room that is knocked down to you. I'll put that in writing for you if you wish."

"It's not necessary, sir," he repeated. "We'll buy the lot of them for you for less money."

"Do, and I shall be a rich man afterwards," said I.

He went away chuckling.

The next day the auctioneer, who was an Irishman, after disposing of several lots of ordinary things, reached the pictures.

"I needn't say anything about them," he remarked. "They speak for themselves. I think you'll all agree with me that there's not one of them that isn't a speaking likeness. What shall we say for this one—number one hundred and thirty-seven in the catalogue, 'Lady Betty ——,' by Sir Joshua Reynolds? Look at her, ladies and gentlemen, and tell me if you think there are many artists in this country who could do anything better than this—all hand-painted, and guaranteed. What shall we say?"

"A pound," suggested my dealer, quite boldly. The auctioneer turned a cold eye upon him for a moment, and then I saw that there was a twinkle on its glossy surface.

"Very well, sir," he said. "A pound is bid for the picture—twenty-five shillings, thirty shillings, thirty-five, two pounds—thank you, sir; we're getting on—two-ten; I'm obliged to you, ma'am—three pounds—ten—three pounds ten—three pounds ten bid for the portrait of Lady Betty. Oh, ladies and gentlemen, wouldn't it be a shame if such a picture was to be knocked down for seventy shillings, and it's worth nearly as many pounds? Four pounds—thank you, sir. The bidding is against you, ma'am. Well, if there's no advance——"

It was my dealer who had made the last bid, and I must confess that for some seconds I actually fancied that I was to be placed in possession of a Reynolds for four pounds.

"Four pounds—going at four pounds," came the voice of the auctioneer. "If there's no advance—going at four pounds—going—for the last time—five hundred—six hundred—seven hundred—a thousand—fifteen hundred—two thousand—guineas—five hundred—guineas—three thousand—guineas—going for three thousand



"'A POUND,' SUGGESTED MY DEALER, QUITE BOLDLY."

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guineas, ladies and gentlemen, it's giving the picture away that I am, but still the times are bad. Going at three thousand guineas—going—going—— Gone to Mr. Colnaghi."

The hammer fell, and everyone was laughing except the Irish auctioneer and my dealer.

"Perhaps our dashing friend will give me an advance of thirty shillings on the next lot—'Ralph, first Earl of ——'?" said the auctioneer, glancing towards the dealer with an insinuating smile.

The latter forced his way towards the nearest door, leaving lot one hundred and thirty-eight to be started by a London dealer at a thousand pounds.

My disappointed friend had never been at a great sale in his life, and he had certainly not suspected that the gentlemen wearing the silk hats were like himself, dealers—only on perhaps a somewhat more heroic scale.

The humours of the auction-room deserve to be dealt with more fully than is in my power to treat them. Though an auctioneer's fun is sometimes a little forced, its aim being to keep his visitors in a good temper with him—for he knows that every time he knocks something down to one person he hurts the feelings of the runner-up—still, now and again something occurs to call for a witty comment, and occasionally a ludicrous incident may brighten up the monotonous reiteration of slowly increasing sums of money. I have heard that long ago most lords of the rostrum were what used to be called "characters," and got on the friendliest terms with the people on the floor. But now I fear that there is no time for such amenities, though I heard one of the profession say, announcing a new lot:—

"Halloa! what have we here? Lot sixty-seven—Adam's bed! Ladies and gentlemen, there's a genuine antiquity for you—Adam's bed. I shouldn't wonder if the quilt was worked by Eve herself, though I believe she was better at aprons."

The auctioneers as a rule, however, hurry from lot to lot without wasting time referring to the charm of any one in particular. I cannot understand how they avoid doing so sometimes when a beautiful work of art is brought to the front.

But in the old days I believe that now and again a trick was resorted to with a view to arouse the interest of possible purchasers in the business of the day. I knew of such a little comedy being played with a good deal of spirited action in an auction room in a large town in the Midlands. An Irish dealer was in the habit of sending round from town to town as much stuff as a large furniture-van would hold, to be offered for sale by auction. Of course he placed a reserve on every article, and if this figure was not reached in one town he packed up the thing, to give it a chance in the next; so that within a few weeks he managed to get rid of a large number of things at quite remunerative prices.

It so happened, however, that he wanted money badly when he reached the town where he began his operations, and he made a confidant of the auctioneer, who promised to do his best in regard to the goods. The articles were consequently displayed in the rooms, and a considerable number of people assembled before the auctioneer mounted the rostrum. The bidding was, however, very spiritless, and the first dozen lots were knocked down to imaginary buyers at imaginary figures, but just when the thirteenth lot was exhibited there appeared at the farther end of the room a rather excited figure.

"Stop the sale!" he cried. "I'm not going to stand passively by while you give my goods away. I don't mind a reasonable sacrifice, but I'm not going to submit to such a massacre as has been going on here up to the present. Stop the sale!"

"Look you here, Mr. O'Shaughnessy," said the auctioneer. "Massacre or no massacre, I received instructions from you to sell your stuff without reserve, and sell it I will, whatever you may say."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, I tell you," cried the Irishman. "Come down from that reading-desk, and don't continue to make a fool of me. I'm not going to see my things thrown away. You know what they are worth as well as I do, and yet you knock them down for a quarter their value!"

"Now, my good man, if you don't get out of this room I'll have to take stronger measures with you," said the auctioneer. "I know that the stuff is all that you say it is, but that's nothing to me. The highest bidder will get the best of it, whether he bids to half the value or a quarter the value for that matter. You are making a fool of yourself, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, but you won't make a fool of me. I'm here to sell, and sell I shall. Now sit down or leave the premises."

"I'll not sit down. I tell you I'll not——"

"Porter," cried the auctioneer, "turn that gentleman out, and if he won't go quietly call a policeman. You hear?"

A couple of stalwart porters approached the vender saying soothing words, but he refused to move, and they had to force him to the door. They did so, however, as tenderly

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as possible, though he kept on shouting as he went reluctantly backwards step by step that the auctioneer was in a conspiracy to ruin him, allowing his goods to be taken away for nothing.

At last he was in the street and the door was closed.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the auctioneer, "I must apologize for this scene. Such a thing never happened in my mart before, and I hope it will never happen again. But I know my position, and I've no intention of breaking faith with the public whatever that man may do or say. I hope you'll excuse him; he is really the best judge of antiques I ever met, but when he gets a drop of drink there's no holding him in. Now, gentlemen, he'll not disturb us again, and with your leave I'll proceed with the sale. I'll do my duty by you, and I'll do my duty by him, whether he has insulted me or not. He may be an excitable Irishman, but that's no reason why we shouldn't do our best for him. Fair play, ladies and gentlemen, fair play to everybody. We must not allow our prejudices to blind us. You know as well as I do that the stuff is the finest that has ever come to this town, though the vender would be safer in the hands of the police than prowling about as he has been. Now, where were we? Ah, lot thirteen, Chippendale mirror, carved wood, gilt. There's a work of art for you. Where did he get hold of such a thing, anyway? What shall we say for it?"

The thing started at a figure actually above the reserve price that Mr. O'Shaughnessy had placed upon it, and the bidding went on with a rush. The next lot—two ribbon-carved mahogany armchairs seemed to be badly wanted by someone. They were knocked down at a figure twenty-five per cent. beyond the reserve. So it was with everything else in the collection. Never had there been a more successful sale in the same rooms.

So at least the auctioneer confessed to the vender as they dined together that evening, and the auctioneer was in private life a truthful man, though not always so rigid in the rostrum.

Upon another occasion, in the same town, there was a dealer's sale at an auction mart, and it went off pretty well, though naturally a good many lots remained undisposed of at the close, for on every article there was a reserve price representing the profit to accrue to the vender with the auctioneer's usual ten per cent. One of the unsold pictures had attracted the attention of a gentleman who had bid as far as twelve pounds for it, and when the sale was over he remained in the mart waiting to see if it should be claimed by a dealer, so that he might have a chance of getting it at a slight advance.

But the auctioneer very frankly confided in him that it had not been sold. The vender unfortunately knew a good deal about pictures and had put a pretty stiff reserve on it. At this moment a local dealer showed signs of being also attracted by the picture. He stood in front of it, and seemed to be assessing its value to the nearest penny. After a few moments he jerked his head to bring the auctioneer to his side, and with a word of apology to the possible purchaser the auctioneer went to the man.

They had a whispered conversation together, but every word was clearly audible to the layman.

"Look here," said the dealer, "you know that I bid up to eighteen pounds for that picture. Well, I'm willing to go to the length of twenty for it if you're selling it privately."

"I'm sorry I can't oblige you, Mr. Goldstein," said the auctioneer. "You know as well as I do who the vender is, and you know that he is as good a judge of a picture as any man living. You know that the picture is worth money."

"Now, what's the good of talking to me like that?" said Mr. Goldstein. "I don't deny that the picture is a good one—one of the best you ever handled, but a man must live. I believe I have a customer for that thing, but I look to make a bit off it for myself, and I must have it cheap."

"And isn't twenty-five pounds cheap for such a work?" asked the auctioneer.

"I don't deny it," replied the dealer, "and that's just what I expect to get for it. But where do I come in in the transaction if I pay you that for it? Do you fancy I stick in auction-rooms all day by the doctor's orders? I'll give you twenty-three pounds for the picture, and if you can't let me have it for that you may burn it."

The auctioneer laughed, and walked away without condescending to reply, and with a grimace of ill-humour Mr. Goldstein left the auction-room.

"Who is that person?" asked the would-be purchaser.

"His name is Goldstein," replied the auctioneer. "He's a picture dealer, and is about as knowing as they are made. He

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has been nibbling at this ever since it was left with me. Of course, he'll come back for it. He's no fool. He knows a good thing when he sees it."

The auctioneer strolled down the room to his office, leaving the gentleman to digest the information which he had given him.

Now, the gentleman was quite an astute person, and it did not take him long to perceive that a picture that is worth twenty-three pounds to a dealer named Goldstein is certainly worth twenty-five to a layman, so the auctioneer was not surprised when he entered his office, saying :—

"Did you mention that twenty-five pounds was the reserve for that picture?"

"That's the vender's reserve, sir."

"All right, I'll take it at that," said the gentleman.

"Very good, sir," said the auctioneer, and he smiled knowingly as he added, "I may tell you that Goldstein offered me twenty-three for it just now. He'll be back with me for it at twenty-five within the hour. I can imagine his face when he hears that the picture's gone."



"MR. GOLDSTEIN WAS THE VENDER OF THE WORK OF ART."

His shrewdness did not deceive him. Mr. Goldstein was back at the mart within half an hour, with inquiries about the picture, and it was with an air of triumph that the auctioneer told him that it had been sold. It is also quite likely that the look which he said he would like to see on Mr. Goldstein's face when he heard that the picture was sold was exactly the one which was worn by Mr. Goldstein, though it might not be just the one which the purchaser of the picture would associate with an expression of chagrin on the face of a person named Goldstein.

The truth was that Mr. Goldstein was grinning quite pleasantly, for Mr. Goldstein was the vender of the work of art, which he had bought for four pounds and had disposed of for twenty-five, less auction fees.

This auctioneer was an unusually clever man. He was heard to confide in a friend his impression that the town he lived in was not sufficiently large to give his genius a chance of being displayed to the full; and that was possibly why a short time afterwards he went to London and started business in one of the most central thoroughfares.

Within six months he was prosecuted for selling bogus Bechsteins, being convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment for an offence which at one time was a serious menace to the piano trade.

I have heard it debated with great seriousness whether a fine-art dealer in a commercial town where the finer arts are neglected is not entitled to resort to a method of disposing of his goods which some people might be inclined to term trickery. Personally I think any form of trickery having money for its object is indefensible. But there are tricks and tricks, and what will be chuckled over by some business men as "a good stroke of business" may, if submitted to a jury, be pronounced a fraud, and it appears to me that people are becoming more exacting every day in their fine-art dealings. They seem to expect that a picture dealer will tell them all he knows about any picture that he offers them, and, should they consent to buy it, that he will let them have it at the price he paid for it. Should they find out after they have completed the purchase that he made any statement to them that was not strictly accurate they bring an action against him. How such people would be laughed at if they were to bring an action against the vender of a patent medicine for having stated on the bottle that it would cure gout, neuralgia, neuritis, and corns when they had tried it and found that it would do nothing of the sort! There was a pill made during the eighteenth

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century which was guaranteed to prevent earthquakes. Some time ago I heard it seriously urged on behalf of an American patent medicine that when the half of San Francisco had been laid in ruins by the last earthquake, the building where the medicine was manufactured remained undisturbed!

But until recent years a pretty free hand was allowed dealers in works of art. I remember being in a shop—called a "gallery"—in a provincial town, in which a good deal of "restoration" in the picture way was effected. The proprietor had a drawerful of labels, each bearing the name of a good old master done in black on a gold ground, and when a work was "restored" to his satisfaction he turned over the labels until he found one to suit its style. Then he nailed it very neatly on to the frame, and the picture was ready for sale as a Moroni, a Velazquez, a Tintoretto, or a Titian, as the case might be. The man was an excellent judge of pictures and prints, and I do not believe that he ever got a picture painted on an old canvas to sell as a genuine work. He simply bought all the good old pictures that he thought worth buying and "touched them up." People bought them on chance, the wise ones asking no questions "for conscience' sake"—the conscience of the vender; and I am pretty sure that many genuine pictures passed through his hands—some that were worth from a hundred to five hundred pounds apiece, for a tenth of the smaller sum.



"HE TURNED OVER THE LABELS UNTIL HE FOUND ONE TO SUIT ITS STYLE."

He saw the humour of his labels better than anyone else, I think. He never gave an audible laugh when I used to inquire if he could provide me with a really choice Rembrandt for thirty shillings; he pretended to take me seriously, and, shaking his head, he would say:—

"Rembrandts with any pedigree are getting scarcer and scarcer every year, sir. You wouldn't feel justified in going as far as two pounds if you saw one that you took a fancy to, I suppose? No? Well, I'll see what I can do for you at your price, but I may tell you that it's rather below than above the figure for a genuine hand-painted Rembrandt."

One day two gentlemen called when I was in the gallery—a major in the gunners and a brother officer.

"Morning!" said the former. "I hope you got the frame in order."

"Yes, sir," replied the dealer, bustling off to where a picture was lying with its face down on a bench. He picked it up and bore it to an easel, on which he placed it in a moderately good light. "That's it, sir. I happened to lay my hands on a more suitable frame, so I didn't trouble with the old one; it's impossible to put a touch of gold leaf on an old frame without making it look patchy."

"I think that's a far better frame than the old one," said the major. "I brought my friend in to look at the picture. Who did you say it was by?"

"Rubens, sir—an early Rubens, I think it is."

"Ah, yes; that was the name. Looks well, doesn't it?" said the officer to his friend.

"Very well indeed. I never saw anything that took my fancy better," said the other. "Look at that silk—rippin', I call it—absolutely rippin'."

"I thought you'd like it," said the major. "There's nothing looks so well in a room as a good old picture. But of course it's easy overdoing that sort of thing."

"Nothing easier—like those American Johnnies," acquiesced his friend. "Yes, a rippin' picture, I call that—good colour, you

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know, but all well toned down. Do you know what it is? I've a great mind to have one, too."

"Good!" cried the major. "You really couldn't do better, you know—six guineas, frame included."

"I believe you're right. Yes, I'll take one, too," said the other, turning to the dealer, who was standing silently by.

"Very good, sir," said the dealer. "I'll look one out for you by to-morrow afternoon, if that would suit you."

"Suit me well. Six guineas in the frame, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir—six guineas, unless—would you like a pair of them, sir? I might be able to take a little off for a pair."

The grave way in which he suggested a pair of Rubenses as if it were customary to sell Rubenses in braces like pheasants was too much for my nerves. I looked at my watch and made for the door, and I hope that I was well round the corner before I burst out.

I heard afterwards that the officer had no use for a brace of Rubenses, but he bought a nice little Dutch village scene by a painter named Teniers for three pounds. It was not signed by the artist, but I have no doubt if he had made a point of having it signed the dealer would have obliged him. The work of restoration frequently includes the restoring of an artist's signature.

So it was impressed on me that there is a humorous side even to picture dealing in the provinces.

That incident, I repeat, took place in the good old days; but if one gives some attention to the law courts even nowadays one will find plenty to laugh at in connection with artful transactions in the fine arts. It was certainly very amusing to see some year or two ago the examples of fine old Dresden which were displayed as "exhibits"—in the legal, not the exhibition sense—in the law courts, all of which were pronounced spurious by the experts, though sold for many thousand pounds to a wealthy old tradesman, and to follow the story of every transaction. But I found it more amusing still to identify the various pieces with the illustrations contained in a back number of a leading magazine of art which had devoted several pages to a description of the magnificent Dresden collection of the old tradesman. What had been referred to as the gems of the cabinets were the very things that were produced in the court as examples of the spurious!



"SIX GUINEAS IN THE FRAME."

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Standing in Between.

By EDWARD CECIL.

Illustrated by W. Dewar.

"YOU'RE a very extravagant cigarette-smoker, Cecil."

Cecil Farley looked up from the sports page of his penny evening paper with surprise. He detected an unusual note of annoyance in his father's voice. Of an urbane, well-bred, and quiet manner, Mr. Edward Farley was one of those men who, when they feel annoyed, show it rather by withholding praise or by remaining silent than by betraying what they feel in the way they speak.

His son, therefore, rightly understood that something unusually unpleasant was pending.

"Yes?" he asked. "In what way, dad?"

"Well, you waste as much as you smoke. Most men smoke a cigarette to the last inch, or nearly so. In that ash-tray there are three halves of three good cigarettes. One may take it for granted they are good ones, as you are not the sort of young man who is likely to buy Woodbines."

Cecil Farley put down his paper and met the challenge. He did not allow his pleasant manner to be ruffled. After all, the matter was not one of very great importance, however important might be the great question underlying it.

"You wouldn't like me to smoke Woodbines," he said.

"No," replied his father, closing what, after all, was only the opening to a much more important matter. "I don't suppose I should. I paid for your Cambridge education, and expect I must abide by the results. Only your extravagance in cigarettes is a detail which shows how your future is shaping itself."

"I will try to be more economical with my cigarettes," said Cecil, diplomatically. "I know it's frightfully wasteful only to smoke them half through. It's a habit I've got into."

"Well, please yourself about that. But there's something I wish to tell you to-night. It isn't a pleasant thing to say. It's this. Here, in my house, you are doing something which is not honourable. It's got to stop!"

Such an accusation was serious, and Cecil Farley knew it, despite the pleasant habit he had acquired of never taking an unpleasant situation seriously if he could possibly help it. He hurriedly wondered whether he had ever heard his father speak so strongly to him before. He braced himself. The quiet smoking-room in which they were alone seemed to become suddenly most unpleasantly quiet. There was a strained and awkward silence.

The young Cambridge graduate sat still and waited. After three years' study of games he had been given a degree, humorously enough, not for his knowledge of games, which was great, but for his knowledge of modern languages, which was very small. He had incidentally acquired polish and *savoir-faire*, and with good sense he now waited to be told exactly what he was charged with before defending himself.

Unfortunately, his father also sat silent. He had decided to speak on a certain matter, and speak plainly. But now, when it had come to the moment for saying what he had got to say, he found it very unpleasant to say it. He waited to see if his son would help him by showing he knew what was referred to. He did not. Obviously the accusation of doing something not honourable had been taken as something very serious. This made the position difficult for Mr. Edward Farley, who had always been rather nervous when face to face with a crisis.

"What am I doing?" Cecil asked at last, very quietly, "which is dishonourable?"

"Please stop paying attentions to Florence Spearman," said his father, bluntly.

Under the healthy tan of a summer spent largely on the river, in the cricket-field, and on the golf-links Cecil Farley coloured up.

"Are people really coupling our names?" he asked. "Are they talking as if we ought to be engaged?"

"Yes. And it's got to stop."

"For what reason?"

"Simply because it isn't honourable. Florence is in every way a nice girl. She's uncommonly good-looking. It isn't fair to her. You've no right to engage her affec-

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tions. There's no chance of your being able to keep her in the comfort in which she has been brought up for the next five years, at any rate—if ever."

No more damning indictment of his University education could have been cast in Cecil Farley's teeth. It meant, of course, that from the point of view of his earning his living and marrying he was useless. It mattered not at all, it seemed, that he had been within an ace of getting his rowing Blue. It counted for nothing that he might be relied on for a century in the best club cricket. His golf handicap might approximate to scratch, but, for all that, in the real business of life his value was practically nothing at all!

He was twenty-five. He was now told to his face that, whatever else he might do in his father's house, he was not to make love to a girl of whom he was genuinely fond. It was hard, and he felt it to be hard. But, since he was honest, even in that bitter moment of being told the truth he knew that his father spoke justly. It was the hardest moment which had come to him since he had reached manhood.

Three or four answers were ready to his lips instantly. But he checked utterance of them. It was useless to protest that things were not really so bad that his money value in the world was absolutely nil. It was unwise to speak of common interests shared by him and Florence Spearman. It would be mere folly to confess that his most pleasant flirtation had already gone deep. All that would but be justifying his father's charge against him and adding fuel to the fire.

Instead of protesting, he accepted the position. He was right in doing so, since he could not prove the contrary to his father's statement that he was not able to earn a living good enough to marry on. But he had something to say.



"YOU ARE DOING SOMETHING WHICH IS NOT HONOURABLE. IT'S GOT TO STOP."

"It was your wish," he said, "that I should go to Cambridge. Since you are frank, dad, let me also be frank. You liked to tell people you had a son at the 'Varsity."

"Yes. I admit it. But I did not know you would pick up only the ornamental side of the life. I hoped you would work and get the habit of work, instead of a distaste for it. You did fairly well at Harrow. You wanted to go."

"Yes, of course I did, dad. Can you blame me? I was fond of my games. But, now I am twenty-five I know this—you shouldn't have let me go to Cambridge."

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If Edward Farley, giving vent to long-pent-up disappointment and an honest business man's dislike of an unsound position, had spoken with feeling, it was his son's turn to speak with feeling now. The young man saw plainly that, well qualified to live and enjoy the life lived by men who have not to earn their living, and even to shine creditably in it above the average of his fellows, he was, at the same time, utterly unqualified for the business of doing the world's work, except as a junior schoolmaster, strong in his games. For such as he there was really only that or —the Church. Between the decorative idlers and the workers he stood in between. Or it would be truer to say that he belonged to the idlers, when his place was of cruel necessity outside their pleasant life, for which, in a sort of ironic mockery, he had been exceedingly well trained.

And his father, who had bluntly shown him what his position was, now saw with a flash of insight that there was really very good reason for being sorry for him.

"Is it more than a flirtation, Cecil?" he asked.

"Yes," said Cecil. "Unfortunately, on my side, at any rate, it is a good deal more than a flirtation."

"I am very sorry," said his father.

That was all he could say. Then, after a pause, he spoke again.

"Still, you must see, my boy, that it is as I say. You can't ask her to marry you."

Cecil Farley stared in front of him. He seemed for a moment to forget that his father was there, and to be oblivious of his surroundings. All the pleasant trappings had slipped away. The naked facts of his position stood before him gaunt and miserable. He had been wilfully blind to those facts for all that summer. Now they were there before him, and, as it seemed, nothing else. He hardly heard his father speaking when he told him kindly what in truth he must have known for himself—that there was his allowance for him as long as he, his father, lived, but that when he died, and the income of his work died with him, there would only be enough to keep his widow and his daughters in decent comfort.

And it seemed hard to the lover as he thought of the girl he loved. And the only satisfaction he had was that, in that moment of his facing the facts, he felt that somehow he had never quite realized before how much he really loved Florence Spearman till he saw that life was not altogether the pleasant progress he had imagined it to be.

"I suppose I must give her up," he said, dully.

And Edward Farley, who knew that to some extent he had brought this suffering on his son, said nothing.

Some of us are built on heroic lines. There is, of course, nothing to mark out those who are from their fellows, and the most commonplace-looking man may very likely be a shining hero, no human being knowing it. Constantly this sort of unsuspected hero crops up, here in some dwelling of poverty, there in some home of wealth.

Thinking of such men and women who glorify the story of the human race and prove that, after all, man is made in the image of his Creator, many will say that Cecil Farley ought to have done a certain thing and nothing else after his talk with his father about Florence Spearman. He ought to have gone to her and broken it all off in a way which was clearly open to him. Loving her, he might have falsely shown her that, after all, his was only the affection of a pleasant friendship. She might have looked at him with some surprise. For that supreme moment and for a time he might have been greatly tempted to tell the truth. But he would have kept it up quite naturally, and backed out, leaving the way clear for another. In a short time, as it was not yet too late, the girl would have realized that she had made a mistake in thinking that he loved her, and in due time would have married a man with fewer of the graces of social distinction, perhaps, but more ability to keep her.

It so happened, however, that Cecil Farley was not built to be that sort of hero. He went thus far along the path of renunciation that he went to Florence with the intention of doing what was heroic. He quite intended to show her that what was in truth serious with him was really only a flirtation.

It was at a dance given by one of those very rich men who have homes on the edge of Hampstead Heath. It was a night of perfect summer, and Farley and Florence had found their way into the gardens. He was talking lightly and irresponsibly, as he had intended. Unfortunately for him, she left him all the talking to do. And after a time he felt it getting rather hollow. It was a moment for something better than froth.

Then suddenly, half in desperation, half in sheer awkwardness, he blurted it out, when, of course, he ought to have gone on remorselessly with his froth and avoided the least seriousness as a skater should avoid thin ice.

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"Don't you think, Florrie, you and I have been seeing too much of each other lately?" he asked, abruptly.

Had the scented darkness suddenly become the clear light of day, Florence Spearman would not have been more surprised than she was.

"Why?" she demanded. "What do you mean?"

"Only this," he said, throwing away his cigarette, half-smoked: "people are coupling our names."

She stopped, and, perforce, he stopped also. He knew that not only was he, in real truth, a lover, but also that he had only to ask the boon to be an accepted lover. It was the moment for him to be heroic.

"People mustn't couple our names," he said, with a pleasant smile. "That is going too far."

She said nothing, absolutely nothing. It was her silence which made it so abominably hard to be a hero. But Farley had grit, and he stood his ground.

"Don't let us spoil a good thing," he said, "by going too far."

And he took out his cigarette-case and lighted another cigarette with a steady hand.

He did the thing well—so well that Florence, despite all the valid reasons she had for thinking the contrary, thought, in that moment, that while she brought love, Farley merely brought flirtation to their common stock. Well, it had been pleasant, that companionship of theirs. She had been foolish enough, it seemed, to make a mistake about it. So much the worse for her.

Then she also smiled.

"People talk so easily," she remarked. "Shall we go back to the dancing?"

He gave her his arm, and they walked back through the gardens without speaking.

They had got near to the house when suddenly Florence stopped.

"No," she said; "we are not going to end like this. There is something I want to know. Is it true that you are going to emigrate?"

Farley was taken by surprise.

"This is the first I've heard of it," he said. "What makes you think it?"

"People are saying it, that's all."

He knew it was not—quite all.

"What people?"

"The Robinson-Smiths. Mother and I called there the other afternoon."

"Oh, those two cats! I beg your pardon—those two interfering old maids."

"They are pretty shrewd old maids, at any rate. What they said was this. They said the *average* 'Varsity man has a poor chance of earning a living. And mother, who likes you, you know, joined issue. She said she had often heard that opinion, but that all the 'Varsity men she had known had done very well. Could they give an instance? Then Mary, the one who prides herself on never shirking the truth, however unpleasant, instanced you. She said that for you there was nothing to do but to emigrate. It was that or the Church, she said. Is it true?"

"There's a good deal of truth in it," said Farley, bravely.

"Then you are going to emigrate?"

"Perhaps—eventually, as a last resource."

"Well, I also am out for not shirking the truth to-night," said Florence, steadily. "After what you say there is an explanation for this story of yours about people coupling our names."

It was well-nigh impossible for Farley now to remain heroic. He would hardly have been human had he done so. The situation was quite plain between them.

"Florrie," he asked, "would it mean a very great deal to you—if I emigrated?"

"It would depend."

"On what?"

"On whether I emigrated with you."

Farley did not believe he heard rightly. For a moment he battled with himself. She could not know what life in a new country was, he told himself. He must remain a hero. She whom he loved must be saved from herself. Then he realized, as men do sometimes realize, though they are generally older than he was when they do so, that a man is sometimes given a far greater love than he deserves.

He took her hand, raised it to his lips, and kissed it.

"I must tell you how things really stand with me," he said, unsteadily.

"To-morrow," she said, "not to-night. To-night you must tell me what I want to hear."

They went back to the rose garden.

Mrs. Farley was greatly annoyed when she first heard the suggestion that her only son should emigrate.

"Well, my dear," her husband remarked, when she complained to him, "he's not doing much good here in the old country."

"He is young yet," was her retort. "We are in a good position. I should not like ever to hear that people were saying that our son *had* to emigrate."

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By virtue of her husband's income she was living very comfortably in the select suburb of Hampstead. She was mistress of a nice house in a good road. She kept three servants. She had two unmarried daughters, who, however, were still marriageable; and although she knew that, if she were left a widow and her daughters remained unmarried, she would have to live in a smaller house in less select surroundings, she was one of those women who are constitutionally prone to expect the best till the worst happens. She knew that her son, whom she adored, would have to earn his living, but in the meantime she was very content with him as he was. His society was very congenial to her. Bearing the hall-mark of Cambridge, he was useful both to her and to his sisters in the social life of Hampstead. And some day, of course, as she quite understood, in some way or another not yet clear, he would have to make a place for himself in the world.

"I cannot think," she said now to her husband, "that all the money spent on his education *can* have been wasted."

He answered her briefly.

"It has been," he said.

"I won't consent to his emigrating," she announced, in a manner meant to silence argument.

Edward Farley shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear Julia," he pointed out, "you have no right to stand in the young man's light, even if he is your son. He must make a start in life. If he can't do it here—and certainly he's not doing it—he must do it in one of the Colonies."

"I won't listen to this talk of emigration," she said, obstinately. "It's absurd."

"On the contrary," returned her husband, nettled, "it's wise."

When he switched off the electric light for the night, however, the difference of opinion still remained. This talk of emigration had cut deep. Julia Farley went to sleep blaming her husband, not her son.

The next evening the whole thing came to a crisis.

Had anyone walked down Grassland Gardens, Hampstead, that evening shortly before nine o'clock, and been able to look into the dining-room of No. 20, a crisis is about the last thing in the world he would have thought of. He would have seen four people enjoying their dessert after a good dinner. At the head of the table sat a man with a well-trimmed grey beard, a keen and yet pleasant face, a well-groomed appearance even though he had passed middle age. Such was Edward Farley, who, after a hard day's work in the City, appreciated a home where each evening he dressed for dinner, enjoyed that meal at leisure, and afterwards smoked a good cigar in pleasant surroundings. He was not a rich man, but, as he was in enjoyment of a good income, he was comfortably well-to-do. On his left hand sat his son whom he had sent to Harrow and Cambridge, a handsome fellow, with a strong, open face, evidently an athlete.

Opposite Farley sat his wife, a middle-aged woman, who, being well dressed, looked considerably younger than her years. Opposite his son sat a girl who would have arrested the stranger's attention at once by her striking and typically English beauty. Florence Spearman was a modern English open-air girl who, being tall and well-featured, caught people's attention and compelled their admiration by—to put it in one word—her excellence. One would naturally have expected her to play all games well, and to have a habit of thinking clearly, practically, and to the point on all everyday subjects. One would not have been disappointed.

Such were those four, and the stranger would have looked in and gone elsewhere, uninterested.

And yet, ordinary and uninteresting as that dinner-table of four might have seemed, with its white cloth, its silver, and its pretty flowers, its dish of cherries, its dish of nuts, and its decanter of wine, there was passing there over that dessert a domestic crisis. That dinner of four was a dinner of four of set purpose. It had been quickly arranged by Cecil Farley on his hearing that his two sisters would be out.

Having waited for a silence, he threw down his bombshell.

"I have quite decided to emigrate to Canada," he announced. "I think of going early next year and settling down in or near one of the new towns near the Rockies. I have thought it all out."

"Don't talk nonsense, Cecil," said his mother, promptly. "We can't think of letting you do anything of the sort."

He waited for any other comment, but neither of the other two spoke. So he addressed himself to his mother.

"It's not nonsense," he said. "I mean what I say. It's the only chance of my doing anything really worth while in the world."

"It's only failures who emigrate," said Mrs. Farley, sententiously.

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"FARLEY DID NOT BELIEVE HE HEARD RIGHTLY. THEN HE TOOK HER HAND, RAISED IT TO HIS LIPS, AND KISSED IT."

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"What else am I?" asked Cecil, cracking a nut.

"You are too absurd," said his mother, lightly. "I don't call a man who has rowed for his college and made several centuries at Fenner's a failure, simply because he has not settled down at twenty-five."

The lightness with which she treated the subject was somewhat marred by the silence of the other two. She felt this. Why should the matter be fought out as a duel between her and her son?

"What do you say, Florrie?" she asked.

"A man can't earn his living by his games, Mrs. Farley," said Florence. "You would not like Cecil to be a golf professional or a sort of cricket pro. at a good school. He isn't well enough known to run an athletic outfitter's business."

Mrs. Farley, who had looked for and expected to find an ally, felt her breath taken away by this brutally frank answer. It was almost as if that charming girl, well bred, well dressed, universally admired for her good looks and healthy outdoor outlook on life, to say nothing of her own prowess both on tennis-courts and golf-links, had struck her a blow.

"Do you mean to say," she asked, in amazement, after an awkward pause, "that you agree with Cecil's emigrating? I thought——"

She stopped and changed her mind. She played her last card.

"Your father can easily get you a good opening in the City," she said, turning to Cecil.

"My dear mother," he said, at once, "I know he would. But what use would it be starting me at something at which I should be no good? I could go into his own office, but even there, sooner or later, I should have to stand on my own merits. And in competing with any sharp boy from an elementary school I should be handicapped. Think of it. No matter what office I got into, I should be all day hating it and living only for the hours spent outside it. What would be the sense of putting me into the City after training me for fifteen years for anything else in the world but City life?"

"There is a good deal of truth in what Cecil says," said Edward Farley, from the head of the table.

In the pause that followed Florence did something dramatic. She took from the bosom of her dress a handkerchief folded and folded again. She unfolded it very carefully, as if it contained a most precious possession. She took out of it a small half-hoop of diamonds.

"Cecil has given me this ring," she said, in a low voice. "But he told me, Mr. Farley, that you objected to his being engaged to me. I understand why. That is why, as yet, I have not worn it. But I'm going to. So perhaps you'll listen to what I think about his going out to Canada."

Edward Farley smiled and nodded. His son looked across the table much as a worshipper might look at a goddess. It was Mrs. Farley who spoke.

"Well, what do you think?"

"I quite agree with it," said the girl, steadily, her colour high and her courage strong.

Then, not quite knowing what to do with the ring, and realizing that, after all, the very thing she was longing to do was a very simple way of showing how much she agreed, she slipped it on to her finger. She held up her hand.

"There," she said, "that's how much I believe in his emigrating!"

Poor Mrs. Farley, carried off her feet by this spectacle of romance, felt unable to say anything. She looked at her husband.

"I don't know whether you realize what the waiting will mean while he is getting a home for you," said Edward Farley. "But, apart from that, I can't see how Cecil could ever be given a greater incentive to work than you are giving him."

It was then that Florence Spearman showed the grit which was in her, as well as her shrewd common sense.

"If I went out with him there would not be any waiting," she said.

Cecil himself demurred. He said emphatically that it was impossible. Mrs. Farley broke in with a protest.

"You could never stand the roughness of the life," she said. "Your people would never allow you to go. You see now how absurd this idea of emigrating is."

Cecil began to explain. Edward Farley, who was thinking his own thoughts, leaned back in his chair and, as the other three were all talking at once, remained silent. After a time, however, he intervened.

"I think Florence might be given a chance to say what she has got to say," he suggested.

"I am going with Cecil," she said, "because he will succeed twice as quickly with me as without me. Don't I know that half the men who go out fail because they are alone out there? They've nobody to encourage them, nobody to look after them and help

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them. And, in the end, they can't bear it and come back. Cecil is going out to make a place in the world for me as well as for himself, and I'm going out to be by his side while he's doing it. It's good, sound common sense, if you think of it. I'm not an only child. If my people object at first, they will give way when they see I've made my mind up. I *have* made my mind up. It's my own interest that he should succeed as soon as possible as well as his, and I'm going out to see that he does."

"Why not try another year in the old country?" Mrs. Farley suggested. After all, she would be losing her son. "You cannot think, I'm sure, how much you are giving up by going out to a country like Canada."

"Oh, Mrs. Farley, I have thought it all out," said Florence, seriously. "Here in England Cecil stands in between the workers and those who can afford to be idle. It doesn't matter how he has come to stand there, but there he stands. You see, we have shown you how we love each other, so you must not mind my being very frank. His chance is outside England—his chance and my chance also."

"I think," said Edward Farley, slowly, "that all that you say is right. You can both take some capital to the venture. I do not see why it should not succeed. Courage makes success more than anything else. You ought both of you to be very happy."

"Thank you," said Florence. Then she looked across to Cecil. "Will you take me out with you now, dear?" she asked.

"I think it would be quite safe to do so," he said, smiling. "Don't you, mother?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mrs. Farley.

But with her eyes she thanked Florence for believing so strongly in her son's future. That was all the comfort she got in her hour of failure.



"SHE SLIPPED THE RING ON TO HER FINGER. 'THERE,' SHE SAID, 'THAT'S HOW MUCH I BELIEVE IN HIS EMIGRATING!'"

The two young people had gone out of the room. It was long past nine, and the servants were wondering why the bell to clear had not been rung. Edward Farley looked at his wife, and she looked back at him. Without speaking they knew that they had been spectators of that sort of heroism which the best kind of love is always evoking.

"No girl would have talked as she talked

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when I was a girl," said Mrs. Farley. "They would not have dared."

"I don't know about that," said her husband. "Of course, the modern girl takes things into her own hands a bit more than her grandmother would have thought of doing. But the right sort of lover has always been ready to dare anything."

But the question of how much the modern girl is capable of for good or for evil was not what either Edward Farley or his wife was really thinking about. They knew, as most people do, that a girl nowadays thinks for herself, takes things into her own hands, and makes her own decisions for herself. What they could not help seeing was that neither of them had really had enough courage to face the truth about their son. It was Florence Spearman's courage, not their own, which had laid bare the truth and faced it.



"'I SUPPOSE YOU WON'T MIND BEING JOAN TO MY DARBY?' HE ASKED. SHE SMILED HAPPILY AND GAVE HIM THE RIGHT ANSWER."

"She's a plucky girl," said Edward Farley, warmly. "In my opinion, she'll be the making of Cecil."

"She loves him," said Mrs. Farley, gently, as if that explained all. She paused, then spoke again. "And however great her love," she said, "he's worth it."

"I would not have you think otherwise," said her husband.

They understood each other, those two, and they knew that a great problem had been solved. But somehow there was something more, something not easily defined or even reduced to words at all, something which is constantly inspiring courage and even heroism.

And presently, when he got up, that something made Edward Farley go to his wife and kiss her. It made them both feel young again. It made Mrs. Farley look up into her husband's face and remark that they would very soon become a regular Darby and Joan couple.

"I suppose you won't mind being Joan to my Darby?" he asked.

She smiled happily and gave him the right answer.

Very few people mistake real love when they see it. There was no mistaking Florence Spearman's brave love for Cecil Farley. And there was no need for anxiety about his future, seeing he had won so great a boon. Despite her disappointment, Mrs. Farley knew it.

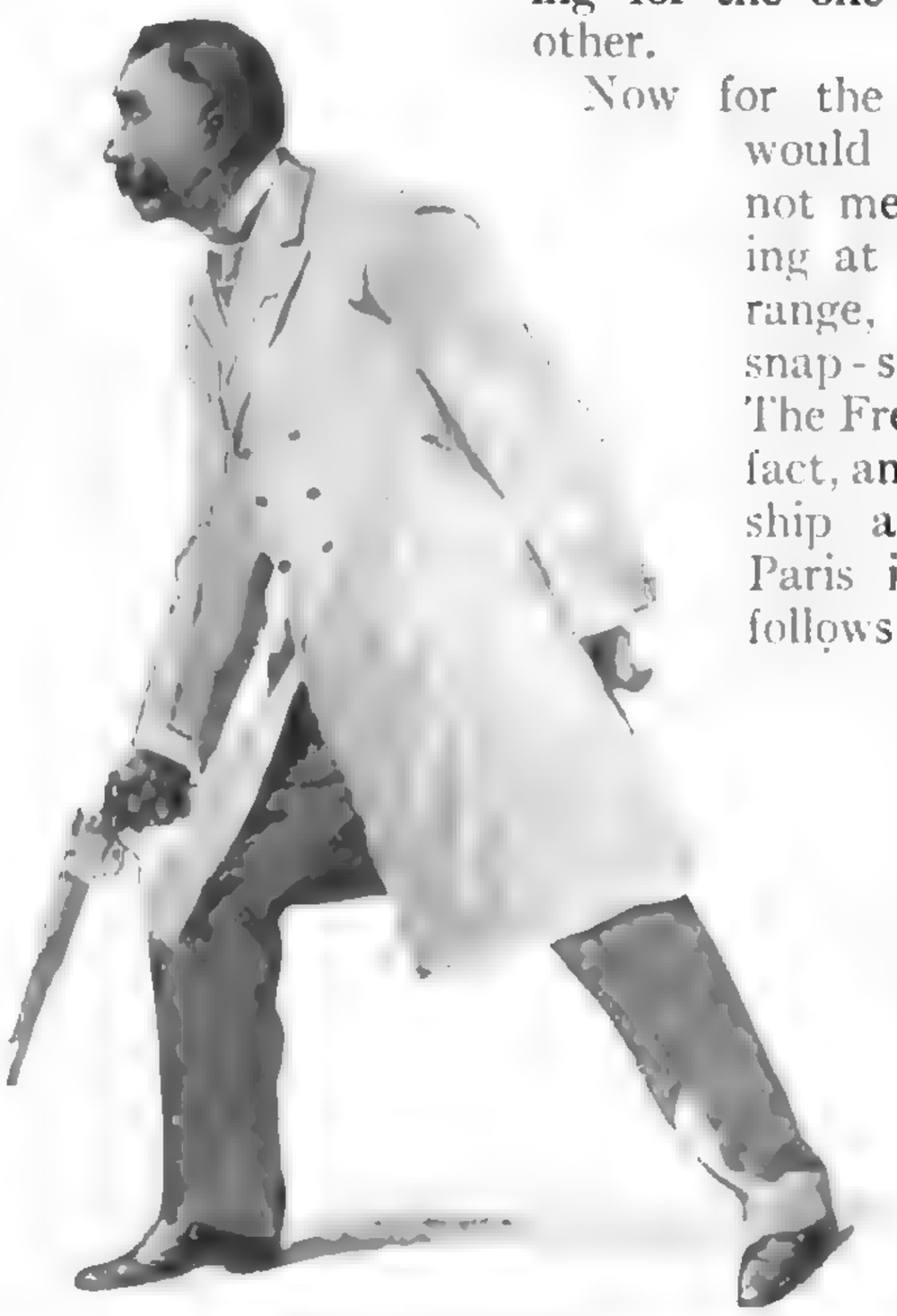
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MY BEST ACHIEVEMENT.

A Symposium of the Opinions of Leading Athletes and Champion Exponents of Outdoor Sports and Pastimes on their Most Memorable Exploits.

THE achievements of the leading exponents of athletic pursuits of every form provide a topic of the greatest interest. Dr. W. G. Grace once remarked that as far as the national summer game was concerned, lookers-on frequently did *not* see "most of the game." "It's all a question of conditions," W. G. added. "I've seen many a first-class batsman bowled by a bad ball which those in the pavilion have mistaken for a clinker. You've got to be actually playing the game to be able to judge accurately whether either batsman or bowler is really being seen at his best."

This expert criticism applies forcibly to almost every sport and pastime. In order, therefore, to provide readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE with their own opinions on their most meritorious achievements, we have collected the opinions of the leading athletes of the day and the champion exponents of many outdoor sports on what they consider is the best "effort" they have ever "put up."



WALTER WINANS.
Drawn by Wallace Hester.

WALTER WINANS.

(Champion Revolver Shot.)

I find it difficult to separate two revolver shoots I have made, one in the conventional target shooting way, and the other in practical shooting. The first was made at Bisley in 1894, when I made the still-unbeaten world's record for twelve shots at fifty yards on a two-inch bull's-eye. The score was eighty-two points out of a possible eighty-four, and the two doubtful shots were nevertheless so close that they had to be officially examined before a decision could be come to whether they were, or were not, bull's-eyes. This won me, with several other scores, the Revolver Championship of the National Rifle Association for that year, also the first prize for military and the first prize for "Any" revolvers at fifty yards, the first six shots counting for the one and the last six for the other.

Now for the "Practical" shoot. I would mention that a pistol is not meant for deliberate shooting at long range, or even short range, but for instantaneous snap-shooting for self-defence. The French are well aware of this fact, and the Duelling Championship at Gastinne-Renettes in Paris is each year shot for as follows: There is a black figure of a life-size man placed at twenty-five metres —about twenty-seven yards—without any visible bull's-eye, but the shooter must judge where the heart is, just as though he were shooting at a real man —the heart counts as the bull's-eye—no aim allowed, but the pistol must be lifted from the level of the knee, and fired in less than one and a half seconds.

I won this championship in 1911 with two scores of twelve shots each. In the first I made the highest possible score; in the second within one point of the possible total—one hundred and nineteen out of a possible one hundred and twenty.

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P. F. WARNER.

(The Famous Cricketer.)

To make runs on a good wicket and to play a good innings on a sticky wicket are two such entirely different propositions that I think I must select two innings as the best I have ever played—that is to say, "the best" in my humble opinion. On a good wicket I think my best was the one hundred and forty-nine I made for Middlesex against Surrey at the Oval in August, 1907. I made one hundred and fourteen of these before lunch, and the remaining thirty-five in forty minutes, and am glad to say that I gave no chance throughout. I feel in justice bound to mention that this one hundred and forty-nine was made against some pretty "hot" bowling, as cricket enthusiasts will appreciate at once when I say that N. A. Knox, J. A. Crawford, Lees, and Rushby were the chief Surrey bowlers.



P. F. WARNER.
From a Photograph by E. Hawkins & Co.

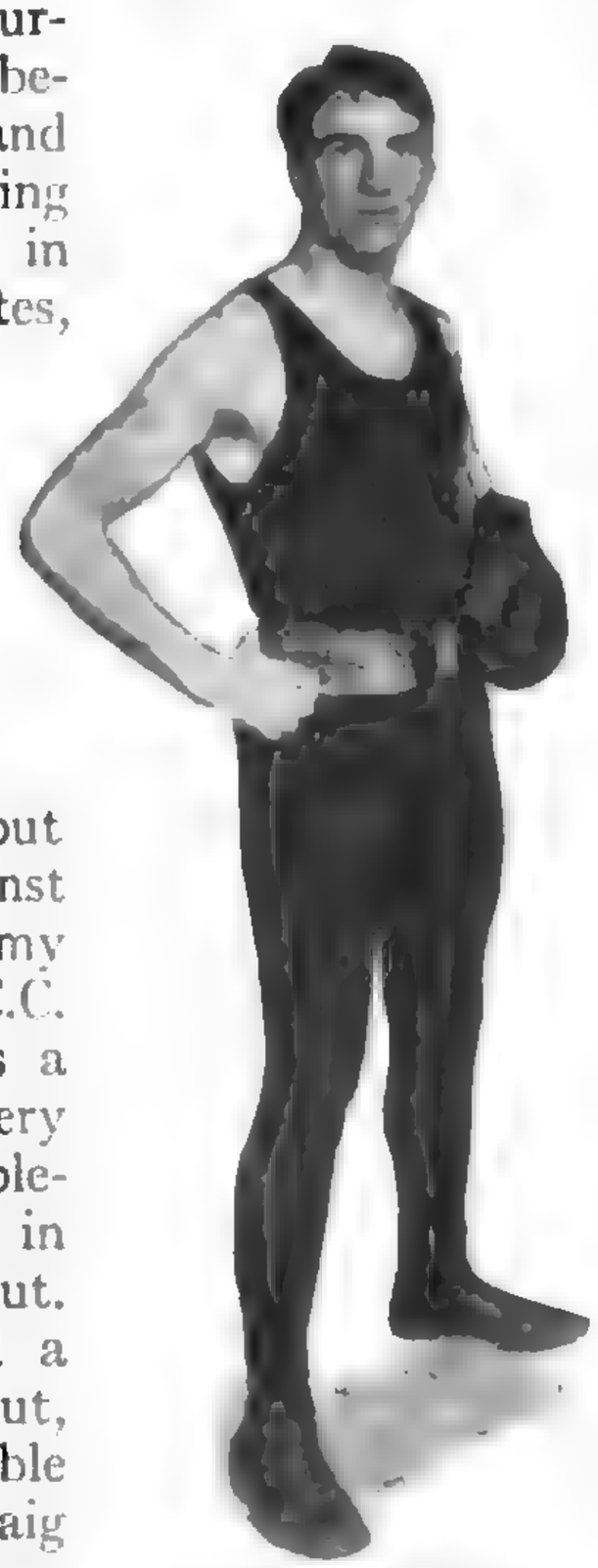
On a sticky wicket I am inclined to put down the sixty-four I made for M.C.C. against Yorkshire at Lord's in May, 1908, as my best performance in the batting line. M.C.C. only made ninety-four — the wicket was a perfect terror and helped the bowlers in every possible way, and there were no other double-figure scores in that innings. I went in first, and gave no chance throughout. Maybe, on paper, this does not sound a particularly commanding performance, but, as I have said, the wicket was too horrible for words, and as Rhodes, Hirst, and Haig were bowling like "books," the performance, maybe, was not such a bad one.

FRED WELSH.

(Lightweight Champion of the World.)

To turn the tables unexpectedly and gain a victory when most of the spectators have been under the impression that one is "beaten to the world" is a happening very pleasing indeed from a boxer's point of view. On that account I have always been particularly gratified at a humble effort which I once put in during a contest with Phil Brock at the Jeffries Athletic Club, Los Angeles, just over five years ago. A week before the match I had the misfortune to sprain my foot while on the road, and it immediately swelled up to double its usual size. As a consequence, I was laid up in bed, attended day and night by two specialists and a trained nurse, up to the day of the fight.

On the morning of the fateful day, one of the surgeons who had attended me during the week injected some drug into my foot, and then bandaged it very firmly, the swollen tendons being strengthened by adhesive bandages. I was then lifted out of bed into the motor-car, which was to take me to the club, and, arrived there, I was lifted into the ring, and there I planted myself in the centre, and for six rounds, with the weight of my whole body on one foot, I kept working within a radius of three feet. My foot was painful when I started, but, as the fight progressed, the agony grew worse. Still, there was only one thing for me to do—to stand firm; so I never lifted my feet or shifted my position. I just clenched my teeth and kept shuffling around within a three-foot radius of the centre of the ring.

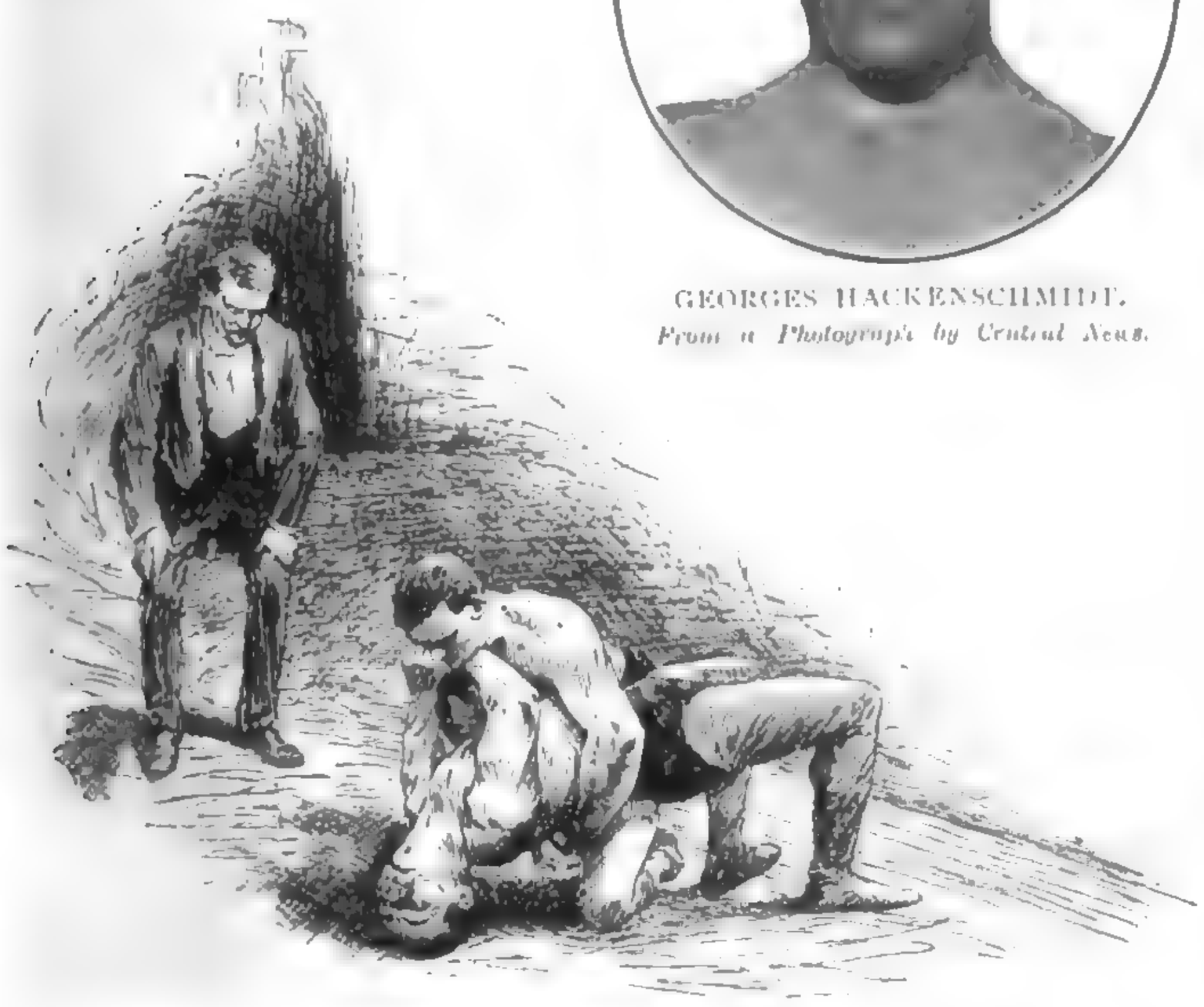


FRED WELSH.
From a Photograph by Sports & General.

At the end of the sixth round—by this time most of the spectators were of the opinion that I had but a very small chance of success—I felt that I could not last very much longer, for the sharp stabs of pain which shot through my body from my foot were agonizing. Then came the seventh round. I rose from my corner for this very gingerly, as the pain seemed to be growing worse every second. Then suddenly, like a flash, something seemed to burst through my whole system. A perspiration broke out

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all over me, and I felt the greatest relief. And, wonder of wonders, my foot became dead to all pain, and I was able to get about the ring with ease. Better still, with the ceasing of the pain there came a reaction, and realizing that I had the task of my life to carry out to make up for my loss of points in the early rounds, I let myself go for all I was worth. It seemed to be a perfect rest to fight, to act, instead of merely thinking, and at once I started fighting!



"AT LAST I SAW A FAVOURABLE OPPORTUNITY, AND IN A TRICE THE TURK'S SHOULDERS WERE PINNED TO THE GROUND."

I have no very clear recollection as to what happened in the earlier rounds, but from the seventh onwards I bore into Brock with the energy of a madman, never slowing down even for a fraction of a second, lest he should have time to pull himself together. Finally, I won easily, and was immediately matched with Packy McFarland before the same club. The reason why—if I may humbly be allowed to say so—I have always felt such great satisfaction over the result of this particular contest is that all the time I was so to speak glued to the ground for the first six rounds, the pain my foot caused me was so intense that more than once the thought crossed my mind that I should have to retire from the ring to have it attended to. But, thank goodness, any will-power I may possess got the upper hand.

GEORGES HACKENSCHMIDT.

(The Famous Wrestler.)



GEORGES HACKENSCHMIDT.
From a Photograph by Central News.

In the course of a lengthy career as both an amateur and professional wrestler I have taken part in so many strenuous bouts on the mat that I find it a matter of extreme difficulty to pin myself down to one performance as being my best. However, after carefully running over my record I think I must give my vote to my success in the great Budapest Tournament.

In this important Continental tournament I defeated Albert de Paris in five minutes, Aimable in twenty-five minutes, and Vandenberg in twenty-four minutes. "So far," I remember thinking at the time, "things seem fairly easy for me." Then came my bout with the famous Turk, Kara Ahmed. The struggle which followed I shall never forget as long as I live. For three solid hours we wrestled and wrestled, until it seemed as if the contest would go on far into the night. At one moment Kara Ahmed seemed to be possessed of a winning advantage; then positions were reversed, and I looked to be "top dog." At the end of the third hour we were both almost as strong as at the start, but at last I saw a favourable opportunity. With the quickness of a panther I seized it, and in a trice the Turk's mountains of shoulders were pinned to the ground. Unfortunately, however, on occasions the fruits of victory have their drawbacks, for as I was carried shoulder-high through the streets by a shouting crowd, many kindly-natured ladies, who were certainly not at all too prepossessing in appearance, would insist upon embracing me in a most affectionate manner, and, in one way and another, I confess I felt uncommonly glad when I reached the privacy of my hotel.

MISS ANNETTE KELLERMANN.

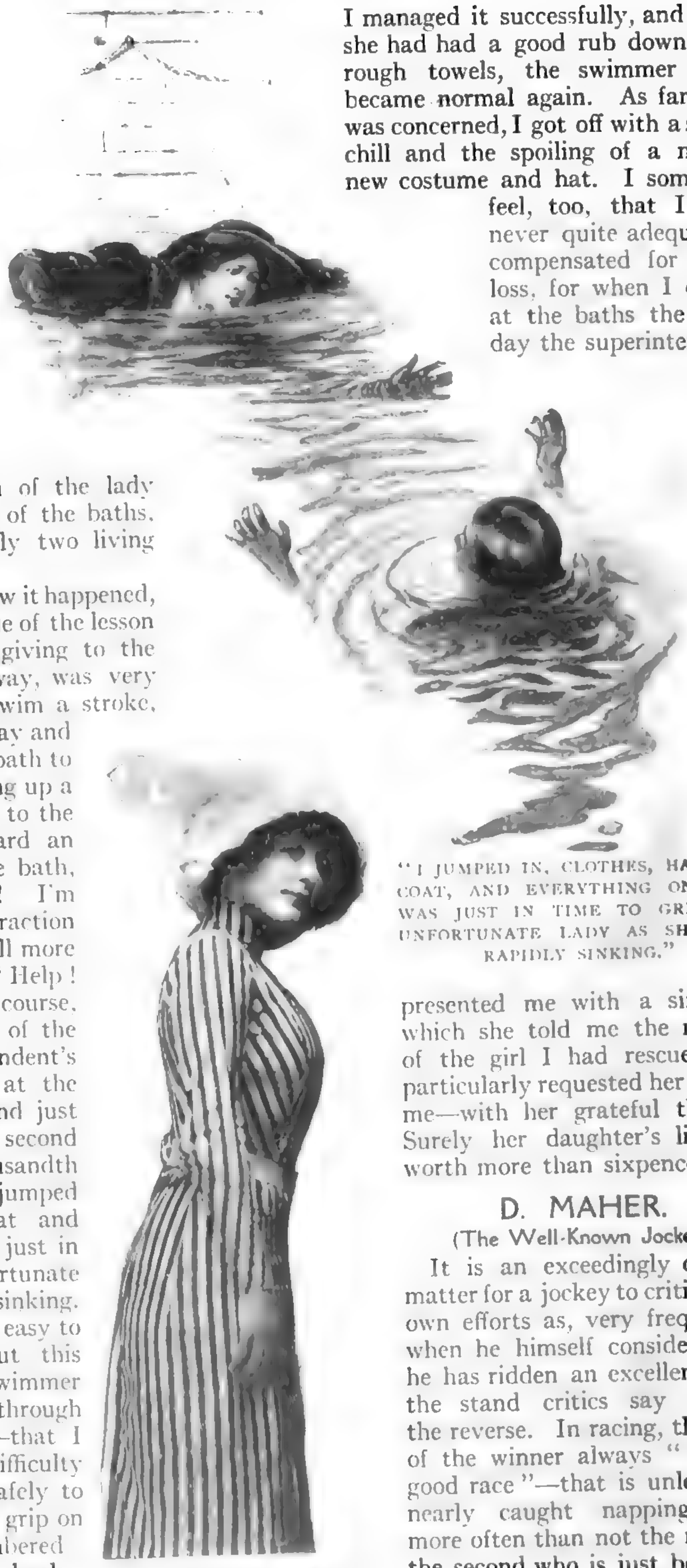
(The Famous Swimmer.)

Curiously enough, the particular incident in my swimming career of which I have always

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felt most proud has nothing to do with the breaking of records, of attempts to swim the Channel, or indeed of anything at all "in the record line." It has to do with a life I once saved in Sydney, some years ago. On a certain morning when the baths were reserved especially for the use of ladies I happened to look in at a time when there was only one lady swimmer present. Indeed, with the exception of the lady superintendent in charge of the baths, she and I were the only two living souls in the building.

I don't exactly know how it happened, but, anyway, in the middle of the lesson the superintendent was giving to the swimmer, who, by the way, was very nervous and could not swim a stroke, the former was called away and I also left the side of the bath to go to the telephone to ring up a friend. Just as I got on to the number I wanted I heard an agonized shriek from the bath, "Save me! Save me! I'm drowning!" followed a fraction of a second later by a still more agonized gurgle of "Help! Help!" I at once, of course, rushed back to the side of the bath to find the superintendent's pupil struggling wildly at the deep end of the bath, and just about to sink for the second time. Without the thousandth part of a second's delay I jumped in, clothes, hat and coat and everything on, and was just in time to grip the unfortunate lady as she was rapidly sinking. Some people it is quite easy to save in the water, but this particular would-be swimmer struggled so fiercely—through nervousness, of course—that I had very considerable difficulty indeed in getting her safely to the side where she could grip on to something while I clambered out to help her to get back to "dry land." However, I managed it successfully, and after she had had a good rub down with rough towels, the swimmer soon became normal again. As far as I was concerned, I got off with a slight chill and the spoiling of a nearly new costume and hat. I somehow feel, too, that I was never quite adequately compensated for their loss, for when I called at the baths the next day the superintendent presented me with a sixpence which she told me the mother of the girl I had rescued had particularly requested her to give me—with her grateful thanks! Surely her daughter's life was worth more than sixpence.



MISS ANNETTE KELLERMANN.
From a Photograph by Elwin Neame.

"I JUMPED IN, CLOTHES, HAT AND COAT, AND EVERYTHING ON, AND WAS JUST IN TIME TO GRIP THE UNFORTUNATE LADY AS SHE WAS RAPIDLY SINKING."

D. MAHER.

(The Well-Known Jockey.)

It is an exceedingly difficult matter for a jockey to criticize his own efforts as, very frequently, when he himself considers that he has ridden an excellent race, the stand critics say exactly the reverse. In racing, the rider of the winner always "rides a good race"—that is unless he's nearly caught napping—and more often than not the rider of the second who is just beaten is condemned as having ridden a

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bad race when, as a matter of actual fact, he may not improbably have ridden one of the best races of his life. Regarding race-riding as an art, I feel strongly convinced that I am right when I say that many a jockey who has finished close up second or third, and has been blamed for not actually winning, has really ridden a far better race than the "skipper" of the winner, who, maybe, has scored with several pounds in hand.

It will thus be seen that it is almost impossible for a jockey to criticize his own efforts and convince the racing public that he is doing so in a sound manner. In my own case, I can think of many a narrow victory I have gained when people have been kind enough to say that success has been more due to jockeyship than to any merit on the part of my mount. No win of this kind, however, has ever given me quite such satisfaction as my first success in the Derby in 1903, when I won the blue riband of the Turf on Sir James Miller's Rock Sand.



D. MAHER WINNING THE DERBY OF 1903 ON ROCK SAND.

From a Photograph by Sports & General.

Of that ride I shall always feel proud, for Rock Sand, in my opinion, was a really good horse, although racing experts declare that all the three-year-olds of 1903 were a moderate lot. I do not, however, consider that Rock Sand can be fairly classed in this category, as he was a long way in front of all his rivals of the same age, and was a real game little horse who could boast of one quality of inestimable value in a thoroughbred—he never shirked his work.

Yes, if I live to be as old as Methuselah, I shall probably never feel quite so great satisfaction at riding a winner as when I steered Rock Sand first past the post in the Derby of 1903.

BOMBARDIER WELLS.

(Heavyweight Boxing Champion of England.)

I have certainly won more important contests, but many boxing experts have told me—and I fancy they are right, too—that I have never put up a better performance in the ring than when I defeated Flynn at Olympia, some two years ago. Before the contest, I have an idea that most followers of boxing were of the opinion that Flynn would win—and win with something to spare, too. I felt, therefore, that it was up to me to do something big, for I knew well that were I to suffer defeat, I should drop down considerably in reputation.

For the first few rounds honours were fairly even, but as the fight progressed I gradually assumed a lead on points, and, at the end of the fifteenth round, when I returned to my corner my seconds said: "You're well ahead on points, Billy. Flynn can only win by a knock-out; so keep him off, and box him rather than try for a knock-out, unless you see a good opening." In those last five rounds Flynn, who was still strong, did everything he possibly could to hand me out "a sleeping draught." Game boxer that he was, he fought as gamely as a pebble and as fair as any man ever could

D. MAHER.

From a Photograph by Central News.

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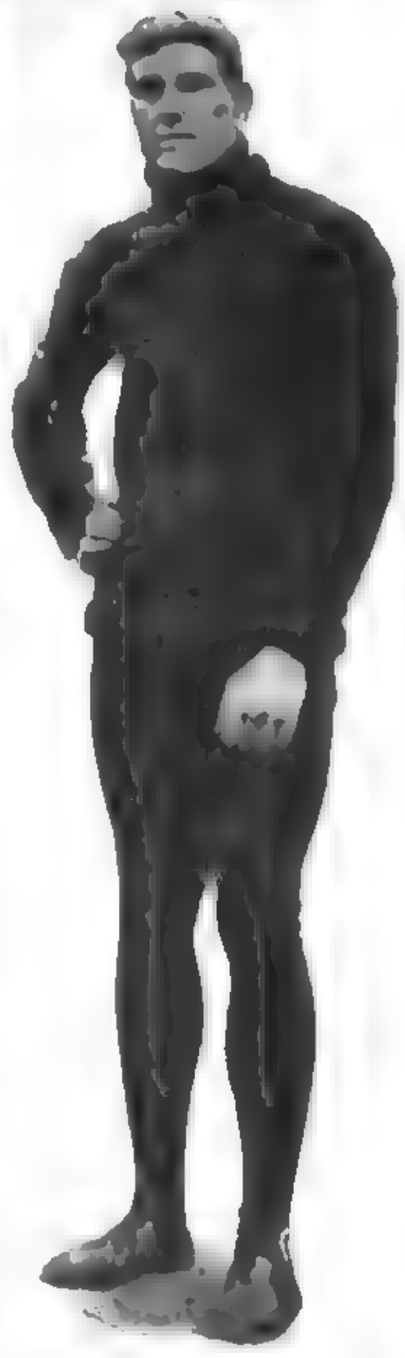
"I FANCY I HAVE NEVER PUT UP A BETTER PERFORMANCE THAN WHEN I DEFEATED FLYNN."

From a Photograph by Topical.

fight. All the time he was coming on and on, and I knew that if I ran up against one of those swinging rights of his I should probably discover that we weren't playing at pillow-fighting or blind-man's buff.

When we took the ring for the last round the excitement in the crowded building was intense, for, while I was as strong as could be, Flynn was also far from lacking in punching power, and when two boxers are strong you never know what may happen, as Corbett found out in the twenty-third round in his first match with Jeffries, when he thought he was winning easily, only to wake up some twelve seconds later to find that he had been beaten and counted out. But, as far as I was concerned, it was a case of "All's well that ends well," and finally I gained a fairly easy victory on points.

As proof, however, of the general impression in boxing circles that Flynn would win easily I might mention that after the contest, Mr. Hugh D. McIntosh, the famous sports promoter, came up to me and said, "Wells, I congratulate you. If any man had come into my office this morning and had told me that he thought you would even stay ten rounds with Flynn I should have quietly shown him the door as a lunatic not responsible for what he was talking about." Since then, all sorts of things have happened, and I have naturally gained a lot more experience. But, all the same, and under all the circumstances, I don't think I've ever put up a better performance than that against Flynn at Olympia.



BOMBARDIER WELLS.

From a Photograph.

The Hon. Mrs. ASSHETON-HARBORD.

(England's Leading Lady Balloonist.)

I think that winning outright in consecutive years the Three Year Royal Aero Club Challenge Cup is probably my best ballooning achievement, as challenge cups are rarely won outright in any branch of sport. My first attempt for the cup was on December 18th, 1909, in my balloon, "Nirvana," 80,000 c.f. capacity, with Mr. C. F. Pollock as pilot. By the way, he acted as pilot on all three occasions. We left at 4.30 p.m., the wind on the ground being west by north, but after getting away we found it was due west above, and at first we thought of descending in the Tilbury Docks, but eventually concluded that this would be more dangerous in the dark than chancing the wind changing later on, which, luckily, it did, becoming more north. We left the English coast at Deal, and reached the other side near Ostend in three hours, and eventually descended at Dahl, near Hagen, Westphalia, Prussia, three hundred and thirty five miles, having been in the air fifteen hours fifteen minutes.

I made my second attempt on the coveted Royal Aero Challenge Cup on December 18th, 1910, in Mr. Mortimer Singer's balloon, "Planet," which he kindly lent me. We started at 2.10 p.m., reached the English coast at 4 p.m., leaving



THE HON. MRS. ASSHETON-HARBORD.

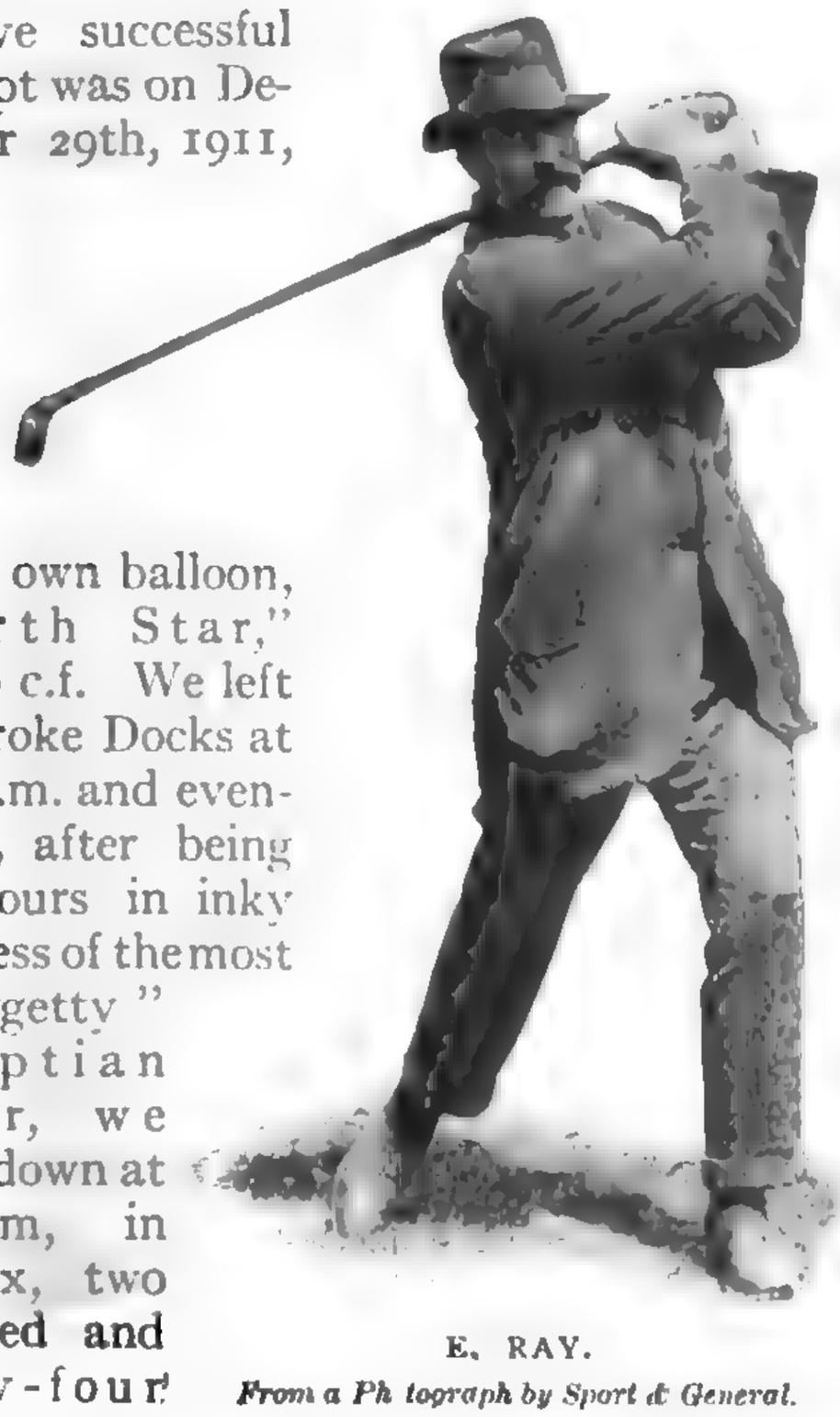
From a Photograph by Bassano.

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Beachy Head about five miles on the right. After passing over Rouen the wind began to change and fall, and by 7 a.m. was blowing in exactly the opposite direction, so that as we were losing our mileage we had to come down at La Chatre, three hundred and fifty miles in eighteen hours thirty minutes.

My third consecutive successful attempt was on December 29th, 1911, in my own balloon, "North Star," 80,000 c.f. We left Pembroke Docks at 2.45 a.m. and eventually, after being five hours in inky darkness of the most "Nuggetty" Egyptian order, we came down at Witham, in Essex, two hundred and forty-four miles in ten hours, which I may say is the longest balloon voyage up to now done in England. I have slightly unpleasant memories of this particular voyage, owing to the fact that during those five hours of darkness in mid-air we had no idea where we were, and the continual roaring of the swollen rivers from the floods sounded very much like the echo of the sad sea waves. And a journey out to sea in pitch darkness, when one has not the remotest idea in which direction one is going, is an adventure which the most reckless balloonist would view with feelings of considerable trepidation.



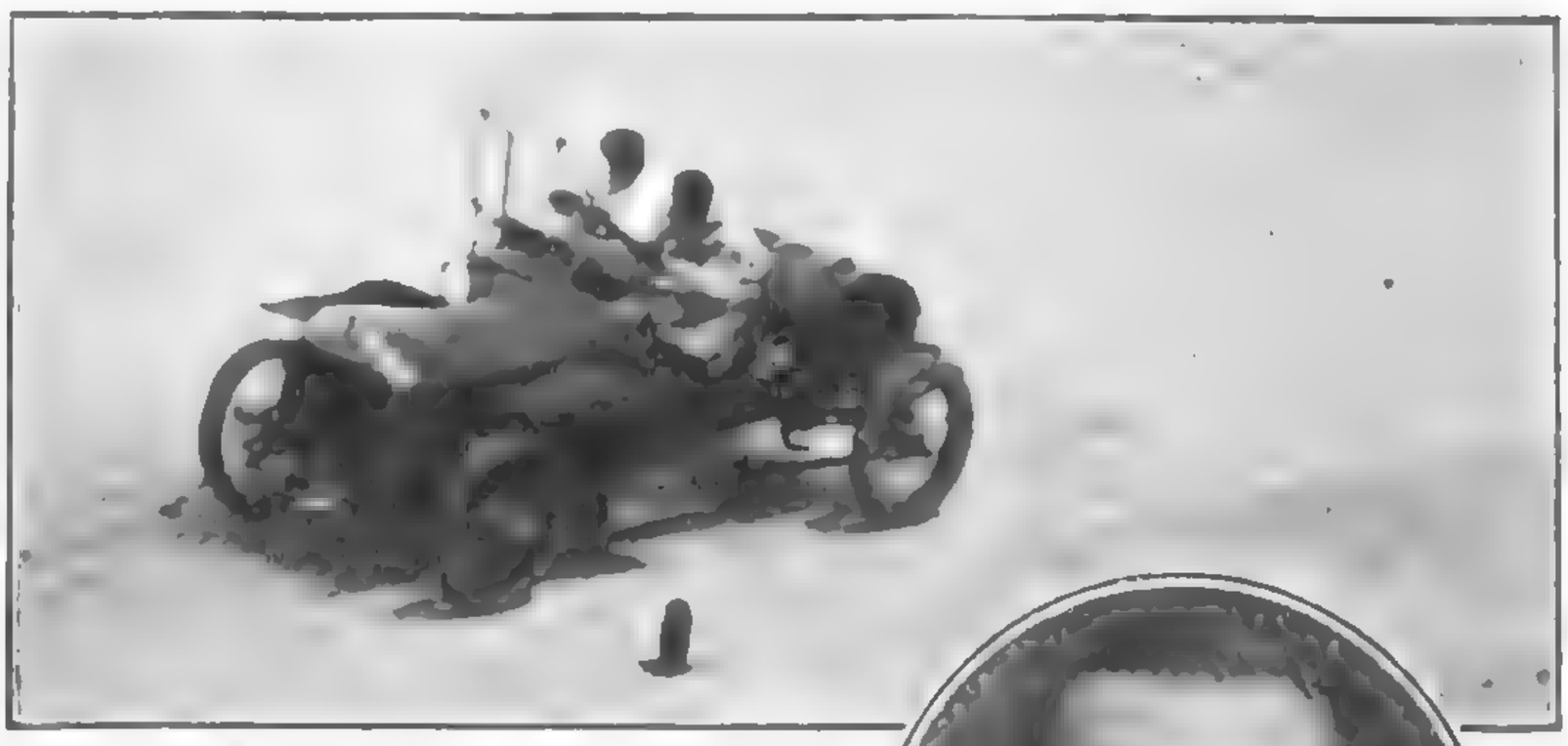
E. RAY.
From a Photograph by Sport & General.

E. RAY.

(The Open Golf Champion.)

Of the many contests in which I have taken part on the links at "ye royal and ancient game" of golf—the game that Scotsmen knock "l" out of—there is one which I shall never forget until Doomsday. It took place at Cruden Bay in 1911, and I was playing against Braid. We had both fought our way to the final, which was an eighteen-hole business. This we halved by Braid holing a fourteen-yard putt on the last green—a pretty useful putt, eh?

It was then decided that we should play a further nine holes. We did so, and this we again halved. I just "got up on the post," so to speak, by holing a four-yard putt for a two at the ninth hole. We then proceeded to play until one or the other of us won a hole. To my great delight I proved the winner at the next hole, where Braid pulled his second shot out of bounds, and I won the hole in four to his five, which gave me one of the most exciting matches ever played. I never expect to play in a better, anyway, or maybe to play better, for on that day both Braid and I were playing bang at the top of our form.



S. F. EDGE BREAKING THE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS' RECORD AT BROOKLANDS.
From a Photograph by Sport & General.



S. F. EDGE.
From a Photograph by Maull & Fox.

S. F. EDGE.

(The Famous Racing Motorist.)

I think that the performance which I may justly consider my best—before it was done it was regarded as most unlikely to come off—was my twenty-four hours' trial at Brooklands. When I suggested driving for twenty-four hours and keeping up a speed of sixty-five miles an hour for the whole time, nearly all the best experts in the motor world both wrote and talked against it, said it was quite

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impossible, no man could stand the strain, and so on and so forth.

As to the performance itself, curiously enough, I found no difficulties in regard to things where one would have anticipated trouble. Driving was pleasant, there was no difficulty in keeping warm, the performance was not monotonous, and if I had wanted I could just as easily have done seventy-five miles an hour instead of the sixty-five that I did.

The thing that created the real difficulty of the ride, however, was the track. This was new, and the continuous running on practically the same ground, round and round, broke holes through the cement, and these holes quickly became very deep indeed, and every time one struck one of them—and there were many on the track—the jolt was very painful from the driver's point of view and very harmful from the car's point of view. It resulted in large numbers of tyres being cut or torn which, under normal conditions, would not have occurred. This, therefore, during the last few hours made the drive very hard, because running into these holes continually was a very severe strain.

Mrs. LAMBERT CHAMBERS.

(Lady Lawn Tennis Champion of England.)

I can't help thinking that a lawn tennis player ought to regard winning a match "all but gone" as an occasion justly deserving of being labelled "My best performance." I can think of a number of matches in which I have managed to "pull the game out of the fire," but none more desperate than a certain mixed double I played in some little time ago. This, I would mention, was not a championship match, but merely an ordinary club game.



MRS. LAMBERT CHAMBERS.
From a Photograph by Central News.

The scores stood four events all, and ours was the deciding match. How remote our chances of success looked at one time will be readily understood by lawn tennis enthusiasts when I say that the score was one set up and five games to love in our opponents' favour. The first set, by the way, we lost at 6—0 and 40—15 to our opponents in the next game, in which the man serving had a positive "demon" of a service. When the score read as above my partner said to me, "It looks as if it's all up with us." I replied, "Nonsense; we are sure to win this." To be quite frank, I also felt things looked pretty black, but I've had a good deal of experience of up-hill games of lawn tennis. To cut a long story short, we eventually managed to win, the score reading 0—6, 8—6, 6—2.



BRUCE LOGAN.
From a Photograph.

BRUCE LOGAN.

(The Well-Known Oarsman who Represented England in the last Olympic Games.)

In 1911 I was rowing at Henley in two events—the "Stewards'" and the "Goblets." In the former race, in the semi-final, we had a particularly hard struggle. I was stroke of our crew, and No. 3, Mr. C. G. Rought, was my partner in the pair. It was a blazing hot day, and after the race, which we managed to win, I was so done up that for over an hour I wasn't able to dress. Mr. Rought was, if possible, in an even worse plight.

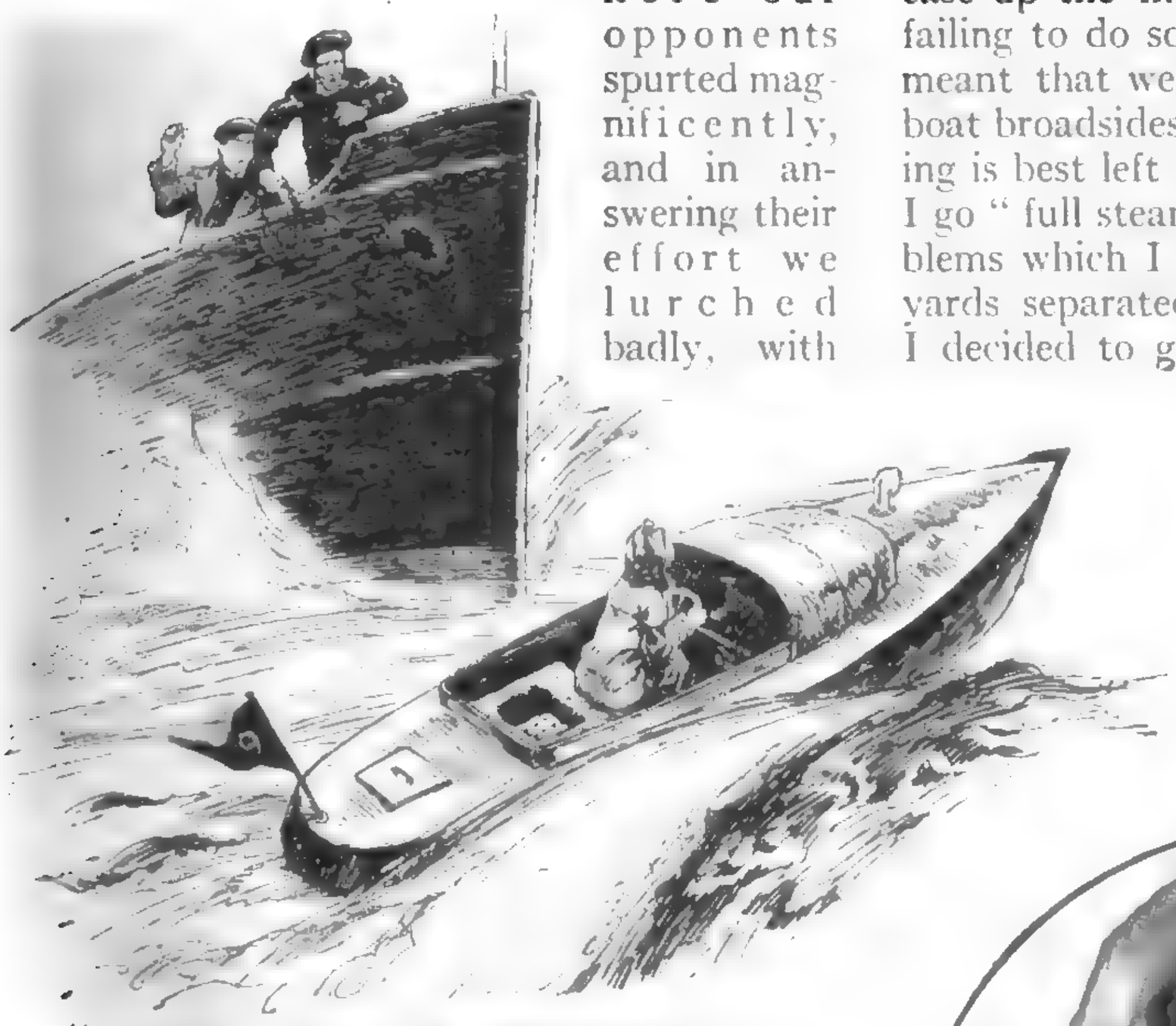
In the afternoon, about four-thirty, we were due to race in the semi-final of the "Goblets," having been drawn against two members of our club, Messrs. Beresford and Cloutte. It can be easily understood that, when going up to the start, we neither of us felt as fit as the proverbial fiddle. To be quite frank, I felt at about "one hundred to three against," and my partner wasn't in much better plight, for in order to get him in sufficiently good trim to face the start at all I had spent the afternoon in applying vinegar compresses to his aching head. To make matters worse I was rowing bow and steering, a thing I had never done before that season,

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while owing to some wrong instructions my work had been altered, and I had great difficulty in clearing my knees. Still, despite these drawbacks, we were favourites for the race.

We got a good start, and at the top of the island had taken a lead of half a length, which we held to Fawley, when the other crew began to come up. At the mile we still managed to keep our nose in front, but here our opponents spurted magnificently, and in answering their effort we lurched badly, with just a trifle proud, but a little happening which took place when I was a competitor in the first motor boat race ever held at Cowes provides the particular incident which I think I can truthfully say has caused me more gratification than any other.

During the race one of the Southampton packet-boats bore right down across the course of the boat I was driving. It was a very ticklish moment. Should I try and ease up the motor-boat and run the risk of failing to do so, which would probably have meant that we should have hit the packet-boat broadsides—the result of such a happening is best left to the imagination—or should I go "full steam ahead"? were the two problems which I had to solve. Less than five yards separated us at the critical moment. I decided to go straight ahead, despite the fact that a warning blast from the steamer's siren sounded ominously terrifying. As luck had it, we just cleared the packet's bows, and so what might have resulted in



"AS LUCK HAD IT, WE JUST CLEARED THE PACKET'S BOWS."

the result that they shortly afterwards took the lead. However, no race is won until the winner's number has gone up, and after a terrific gruelling finish, we got up inch by inch, eventually managing to make a dead-heat of it on the post in the record time of eight minutes eight seconds, beating the previous record by seven seconds. I would mention that, in its own small way, this is rather a unique record, inasmuch as the crews came from the same club, and established a record by dead-heating, also another record for the best time, and another one by beating the "Diamond Sculls'" record of eight minutes ten seconds. But for that punishing race in the morning I have often thought that we might have knocked another second or two off—but one never knows.

Miss DOROTHY LEVITT.

(England's Leading Lady Motorist.)

I can think of quite a number of modest performances of which I frankly confess I feel



MISS DOROTHY LEVITT.

From a Photograph.

an extremely dangerous accident actually ended quite happily.

Apparently his late Majesty, King Edward, who was present, had witnessed the narrow escape I had had, for a few hours afterwards I received a command to accompany Mr. S. F. Edge to the Royal yacht so that His Majesty might inspect my wonderful little boat.

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BITS OF LIFE.

By O. HENRY.

Illustrated by A. K. MacDonald.

I.

The Pendulum.



"KATY."

"EIGHTY-FIRST Street—let 'em out, please," yelled the shepherd in blue.

A flock of citizen sheep scrambled out and another flock scrambled aboard. Ding-ding! The cattle cars of the Manhattan Elevated rattled away, and John Perkins drifted down the stairway of the station with the released flock.

John walked slowly towards his flat. Slowly, because in the lexicon of his daily life there was no such word as "perhaps." There are no surprises awaiting a man who has been married two years and lives in a flat. As he walked John Perkins prophesied to himself with gloomy and down-trodden cynicism the foregone conclusions of the monotonous day.

Katy would meet him at the door with a kiss flavoured with cold cream and butterscotch. He would remove his coat, sit upon a macadamized lounge and read, in the evening paper, of Russians and Japs slaughtered by the deadly linotype. For dinner there would be pot roast, a salad flavoured with a dressing warranted not to crack or injure the leather, stewed rhubarb, and the bottle of strawberry marmalade blushing at the certificate of chemical purity on its label. After dinner they would spread newspapers over the furniture to catch the pieces of plastering that fell when the fat man in the flat overhead began to take his physical culture exercises. Exactly at eight Hickey and Mooney, of the music-hall troupe (unbooked) in the flat across the hall, would yield to the gentle influence of delirium tremens and begin to overturn chairs under the delusion that Hammerstein was pursuing them with a five-hundred-dollar-a-week contract. Then the gent at the window across the air-shaft would get out his flute; the nightly gas leak would steal forth to frolic in the highways; the dumb-waiter would slip off its trolley; the janitor would drive Mrs. Zanowitski's five children once more across the Yalu, and the evening routine of the Frogmore flats would be under way.

John Perkins knew these things would



"KATY WOULD MEET HIM AT THE DOOR."

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"NOW, WHERE ARE YOU GOING, I SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW, JOHN PERKINS?"

happen. And he knew that at a quarter past eight he would summon his nerve and reach for his hat, and that his wife would deliver this speech in a querulous tone :—

"Now, where are you going, I should like to know, John Perkins?"

"Thought I would run up to McCloskey's," he would answer, "and play a game or two of pool with the fellows."

Of late such had been John Perkins's habit. At ten or eleven he would return. Sometimes Katy would be asleep; sometimes waiting up, ready to melt in the crucible of her ire a little more gold plating from the wrought steel chains of matrimony. For these things Cupid will have to answer when he stands at the bar of justice with his victims from the Frogmore flats.

To-night John Perkins encountered a tremendous upheaval of the commonplace when he reached his door. No Katy was there with her affectionate, confectionate kiss. The three rooms seemed in portentous disorder. All about lay her things in confusion. Shoes in the middle of the floor, curling tongs, hair-bows, kimonos, powder-box, jumbled together on dresser and chairs — this was not Katy's way. With a sinking heart John saw the comb with a curling cloud of her brown hair among its teeth. Some unusual hurry and perturbation must have possessed her, for she always carefully placed these combings in the little blue vase on the mantel, to be some day formed into the coveted feminine "transformation."

Hanging conspicuously to the gas-jet by a string was a folded paper. John seized it. It was a note from his wife, running thus :—

"DEAR JOHN,—I just had a telegram saying mother is very ill. I am going to take the 4.30 train. Brother Sam is going to meet me at the station there. There is cold mutton in the ice-box. I hope it isn't her quinsy again. Pay the milkman 60 cents. She had it bad last spring. Don't forget to write to the company about the gas meter, and your mended socks are in the top drawer. I will write to-morrow. Hastily,—KATY."



"ALL ABOUT LAY HER THINGS IN CONFUSION."

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Never during their two years of matrimony had he and Katy been separated for a night. John read the note over and over in a dumbfounded way. Here was a break in a routine that had never varied, and it left him dazed.

There on the back of a chair hung, pathetically empty and formless, the red wrapper with black dots that she always wore while getting the meals. Her week-day clothes had been tossed here and there in her haste. A little paper bag of her favorite butterscotch lay with its string yet unwound. A daily paper sprawled on the floor, gaping rectangularly where a railroad time-table had been clipped from it. Everything in the room spoke of a loss, of an essence gone, of its soul and life departed. John Perkins stood among the dead remains with a queer feeling of desolation in his heart.

He began to set the rooms tidy as well as he could. When he touched her clothes a thrill of something like terror went through him. He had never thought what existence would be without Katy. She had become so thoroughly annealed into his life that she was like the air he breathed—necessary but scarcely noticed. Now, without warning, she was gone, vanished, as completely absent as if she had never existed. Of course it would be only for a few days, or at most a week or two, but it seemed to him as if the very hand of death had pointed a finger at his secure and uneventful home.

John dragged the cold mutton from the ice-box, made coffee, and sat down to a lonely meal face to face with the strawberry marmalade's shameless certificate of purity. Bright among withdrawn blessings now appeared to him the ghosts of pot roast and the salad with tan polish dressing. His home was dismantled. A quinsied mother-in-law had knocked his lares and penates sky-high. After his solitary meal John sat at a front window.



"HE SAT DOWN TO A LONELY MEAL."

He did not care to smoke. Outside the city roared to him to come and join in its dance of folly and pleasure. The night was his. He might go forth unquestioned and thrum the strings of jollity as free as any gay bachelor there. He might carouse and wander and have his fling until dawn if he liked; and there would be no wrathful Katy waiting for him, bearing the chalice that held the dregs of his joy. He might play pool at McCloskey's with his roystering friends until Aurora dimmed the electric bulbs if he chose. The hymeneal strings that had curbed him always when the Frogmore flats had palled upon him were loosened. Katy was gone.



"'I'M A SCOUNDREL,' MUSED JOHN PERKINS."

John Perkins was not accustomed to analyzing his emotions. But as he sat in his Katy-bereft tiny parlour he hit unerringly upon the keynote of his discomfort. He knew now Katy was necessary to his happiness. His feeling for her, lulled into unconsciousness by the dull round of domesticity, had been sharply stirred by the loss of her presence. Has it not been dinned into us by proverb and sermon and fable that we never prize the music till the sweet-voiced bird has flown—or in other no less florid and true utterances?

"I'm a scoundrel," mused John Perkins, "the way I've been treating Katy! Off every night playing pool and larking with the boys instead of staying at home with her. The poor girl here all alone with nothing to amuse her, and me acting that way! John Perkins, you're the worst kind of a fraud. I'm going to make it up to the little girl. I'll take her out and let her see some amusement. And I'll cut the McCloskey's gang from this very minute."

Yes, there was the city roaring outside for

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John Perkins to come and dance in the train of Momus. And at McCloskey's the boys were knocking the balls idly into the pockets while awaiting the hour for the nightly game. But no primrose way nor clicking cue could woo the remorseful soul of Perkins the bereft. The thing that was his, lightly held and half scorned, had been taken away from him, and he wanted it. Backward to a certain man named Adam, whom the cherubim bounced from the orchard, could Perkins the remorseful trace his descent.

Near the right hand of John Perkins stood a chair. On the back of it stood Katy's blue blouse. It still retained something of her contour. Halfway up the sleeves were fine, individual wrinkles made by the movements of her arms in working for his comfort and pleasure. A delicate but impelling odour of bluebells came from it. John took it and looked long and soberly at the unresponsive grenadine. Katy had never been unresponsive. Tears—yes, tears—came into John Perkins's eyes. When she came back things would be different. He would make up for all his neglect. What was life without her?



"'I'M GLAD TO GET BACK,' SAID KATY."

The door opened. Katy walked in carrying a little hand satchel. John stared at her stupidly.

"My! I'm glad to get back," said Katy. "Mother wasn't very ill, after all. Sam was at the station, and said she just had a little spell, and got all right soon after they telegraphed. So I took the next train back. I'm just dying for a cup of coffee."

Nobody heard the click and the rattle of the cogwheels as the third-floor front of the Frogmore flats buzzed its machinery back into the Order of Things. A band slipped, a spring was touched, the gear was adjusted, and the wheels revolved in their old orbits.

John Perkins looked at the clock. It was 8.15. He reached for his hat and walked to the door.

"Now, where are you going, I should like to know, John Perkins?" asked Katy, in a querulous tone.

"Thought I would run up to McCloskey's," said John, "and play a game or two of pool with the fellows."

II.



The Count and the Wedding Guest.

ONE evening when Andy Donovan went to dinner at his Second Avenue boarding-house, Mrs. Scott introduced him to a new boarder, a young lady, Miss Conway. Miss Conway was small and unobtrusive. She wore a plain, snuffy-brown dress, and bestowed her interest, which seemed languid, upon her plate. She lifted

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"ALL BLACK, WITH THE PREFERENCE FOR CRÊPE DE CHINE."

her diffident eyelids and shot one perspicuous, judicial glance at Mr. Donovan, politely murmured his name, and returned to her mutton. Mr. Donovan bowed with the grace and beaming smile that were rapidly winning for him social, business, and political advancement, and erased the snuffy-brown one from the tablets of his consideration.

Two weeks later Andy was sitting on the front steps enjoying his cigar. There was a soft rustle behind and above him, and Andy turned his head—and had his head turned.

Just coming out of the door was Miss Conway. She wore a night-black dress of *crêpe de—crêpe de*—oh, that thin black stuff. Her hat was black, and from it drooped and fluttered an ebon veil, filmy as a spider's web. She stood on the top step and drew on black silk gloves. Not a speck of white or a spot of colour about her dress anywhere. Her rich golden hair was drawn, with scarcely a ripple, into a shining, smooth knot low on her neck. Her face was plain rather than pretty, but it was now illuminated and made almost beautiful by her large grey eyes that gazed above the houses across the street into the sky with an expression of the most appealing sadness and melancholy.

Gather the idea, girls—all black, you know, with the preference for *crêpe de*—oh, *crêpe de Chine*—that's it! All black, and that sad, faraway look, and the hair shining under the black veil (you have to be a blonde, of course), and try to look as if, although your young life had been blighted just as it was about to give a hop-skip-and-a-jump over the threshold of life, a walk in the park might do you good, and be sure to stroll out of the door at the right moment, and—oh, it'll fetch 'em every time. But how cynical I am to talk about mourning costumes this way.

Mr. Donovan suddenly reinscribed Miss Conway upon the tablets of his consideration. He threw away the remaining inch-and-a-quarter of his cigar, that would have been good for eight minutes yet, and quickly shifted his centre of gravity to his low-cut patent leathers.

"It's a fine, clear evening, Miss Conway," he said.

"To those who have the heart to enjoy it, it is, Mr. Donovan," said Miss Conway, with a sigh.

Mr. Donovan, in his heart, cursed fair weather. Heartless weather! It should hail and blow and snow to be consonant with the mood of Miss Conway.

"I hope none of your relatives—I hope you haven't sustained a loss?" ventured Mr. Donovan.

"Death has claimed," said Miss Conway, hesitating—"not a relative, but one who—but I will not intrude my grief upon you, Mr. Donovan."

"Intrude?" protested Mr. Donovan. "Why, Miss Conway, I should be delighted—that is, I should be sorry—I mean I'm sure nobody could sympathize with you more truly than I would."

Miss Conway smiled a little smile. And oh, it was sadder than her expression in repose.

"'Laugh, and the world laughs with you; weep, and they give you the laugh,'" she quoted. "I have learned that, Mr. Donovan. I have no friends or acquaintances in this city. But you have been kind to me. I appreciate it highly."

He had passed her the pepper twice at the table.

"It's hard to be alone in New York—that's a certainty," said Mr. Donovan. "But, say—whenever this little old town does loosen up and get friendly it goes the limit. Say



"HE HAD PASSED HER THE PEPPER TWICE AT THE TABLE."

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"A QUIET BENCH IN THE PARK."

you took a little stroll in the park, Miss Conway—don't you think it might chase away some of your mully-grubs? And if you'd allow me——"

"Thanks, Mr. Donovan. I shall be pleased to accept your escort if you think the company of one whose heart is filled with gloom could be anyway agreeable to you."

Through the open gates of the iron-railed old park, where the elect once took the air, they strolled, and found a quiet bench.

There is this difference between the grief of youth and that of old age: youth's burden is lightened by as much of it as another shares; old age may give and give, but the sorrow remains the same.

"He was my *fiancé*," confided Miss Conway, at the end of the hour. "We were going to be married next spring. I don't want you to think that I am deceiving you, Mr. Donovan, but he was a real Count. He had an estate and a castle in Italy. Count Fernando Mazzini was his name. I never saw the equal of him for elegance. Papa objected, of course, and once we eloped, but papa overtook us, and carried me back. I thought papa and Fernando would fight a duel. Papa has a livery business, you know.

"Finally, papa came round, all right, and said we might be married next spring. Fernando showed him proofs of his title and wealth, and then went over to Italy to get the castle fixed up for us. Papa's very proud, and when Fernando wanted to give me several thousand dollars for my trousseau he called him something awful. He wouldn't even let me take a ring or any presents from him. And when Fernando sailed I came to the city and got a position as cashier in a sweet-shop. Three days ago I got a letter from Italy, forwarded from home, saying that Fernando had been killed in a gondola accident. That is why I am in mourning. My heart, Mr. Donovan, will remain for ever in his grave. I know I am poor company, Mr. Donovan, but I cannot take any interest in anyone. I should not care to keep you from gaiety and your friends who can smile and entertain you. Perhaps you would prefer to walk back to the house?"



"I KNOW I AM POOR COMPANY, MR. DONOVAN, BUT I CANNOT TAKE ANY INTEREST IN ANYONE."

Now, girls, if you want to observe a young man hustle out after a pick and shovel, just tell him that your heart is in some other fellow's grave. Young men are grave-robbers by nature. Ask any widow. Something must be done to restore that missing organ to weeping angels in *crêpe de Chine*. Dead men certainly get the worst of it from all sides.

"I'm awfully sorry," said Mr. Donovan, gently. "No, we won't

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walk back to the house just yet. And don't say you have no friends in this city, Miss Conway. I'm awfully sorry, and I want you to believe I'm your friend and that I'm awfully sorry."

"I've got his picture here in my locket," said Miss Conway, after wiping her eyes with her handkerchief. "I never showed it to anybody; but I will to you, Mr. Donovan, because I believe you to be a true friend."



"YOUNG MEN ARE GRAVE-ROBBERS BY NATURE. ASK ANY WIDOW."

Mr. Donovan gazed long and with much interest at the photograph in the locket that Miss Conway opened for him. The face of Count Mazzini was one to command interest. It was a smooth, intelligent, bright, almost a handsome face—the face of a strong, cheerful man who might well be a leader among his fellows.

"I have a larger one, framed, in my room," said Miss Conway. "When we return I will show you that. They are all I have to remind me of Fernando. But he will ever be present in my heart, that's a certainty."

A subtle task confronted Mr. Donovan—that of supplanting the unfortunate Count in the heart of Miss Conway. This his admiration for her determined him to do. But the magnitude of the undertaking did not seem to weigh upon his spirits. The sympathetic but cheerful friend was the *rôle* he essayed; and he played it so successfully that the next half-hour found them conversing pensively across two plates of ice-cream, though yet there was no diminution of the sadness in Miss Conway's large grey eyes.

Before they parted in the hall that evening she ran upstairs and brought down the framed photograph wrapped lovingly in a white silk scarf. Mr. Donovan surveyed it with inscrutable eyes.

"He gave me this the night he left for Italy," said Miss Conway. "I had the one for the locket made from this."

"A fine-looking man," said Mr. Donovan, heartily. "How would it suit you, Miss Conway, to give me the pleasure of your company to Coney next Sunday afternoon?"

A month later they announced their engagement to Mrs. Scott and the other boarders. Miss Conway continued to wear black.

A week after the announcement the two sat on the same bench in the park, while the fluttering leaves of the trees made a dim, kinetoscopic picture of them in the moonlight. But Donovan had worn a look of abstracted gloom all day. He was so silent to-night that love's lips could not keep back any longer the questions that love's heart propounded.

"What's the matter, Andy?"

"Nothing, Maggie."



"CONVERSING PENSIVELY ACROSS TWO PLATES OF ICE-CREAM."

"I know better. Can't I tell? You never acted this way before. What is it?"

"It's nothing much, Maggie."

"Yes it is; and I want to know. I'll bet it's some other girl you are thinking about.

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All right. Why don't you go to her if you want her? Take your arm away, please."

"I'll tell you, then," said Andy, wisely, "but I guess you won't understand it exactly. You've heard of Mike Sullivan, haven't you? 'Big Mike' Sullivan, everybody calls him."

"No, I haven't," said Maggie. "And I don't want to, if he makes you act like this. Who is he?"

"He's the biggest man in New York," said Andy, almost reverently. "He can about do anything he wants to do with Tammany or any other old thing in the political line. He's a mile high and as broad as East River. You say anything against Big Mike, and you'll have a million men on your collarbone in about two seconds. Why, he made a visit over to the old country awhile back, and the kings took to their holes like rabbits.

"Well, Big Mike's a friend of mine. I ain't much in the district as far as influence goes, but Mike's as good a friend to a little man or a poor man as he is to a big one. I met him to-day on the Bowery, and what do you think he does? Comes up and shakes hands. 'Andy,' says he, 'I've been keeping eyes on you. You've been going strong and I'm proud of you. What'll you take to drink?' I told him I was going to get married in two weeks. 'Andy,' says he, 'send me an invitation, and I'll come to the wedding.' That's what Big Mike says to me; and he always does what he says. You don't understand it, Maggie, but I'd have one of my hands cut off to have Big Mike Sullivan at our wedding. It would be the proudest day of my life. When he goes to a man's wedding, there's a chap being married that's made for life. Now, that's why I've been looking sore to-night."

"Why don't you invite him, then?"

"There's a reason why I can't," said Andy. "Don't ask me what, for I can't tell you."

"Oh, I don't care," said Maggie. "It's something about politics, of course. But it's no reason why you can't smile at me."

"Maggie," said Andy, presently, "do you think as much of me as you did of your—as you did of the Count Mazzini?"

He waited a long time, but Maggie did not reply. And then, suddenly she leaned against his shoulder and began to cry.

"There, there, there!" soothed Andy, putting aside his own trouble. "And what is it, now?"

"Andy," sobbed Maggie. "I've lied to you, and you'll never marry me, or love me any more. But I feel that I've got to tell. Andy, there never was so much as the little finger of a Count. I never had a beau in my life. But all the other girls had; and they talked about 'em; and that seemed to make the fellows like 'em more. And, Andy, I look well in black—you know I do. So I went out to a photographer's and bought that picture, and had a little one taken for my locket, and made up all that story about the Count, and about his being killed, so that I could wear black. And nobody can love a liar, and you'll hate me, Andy, and I shall die for shame. Oh, there never was anybody I liked but you—and that's all."



"A MONTH LATER THEY ANNOUNCED THEIR ENGAGEMENT."

But instead of being pushed away, she found Andy's arm folding her closer. She looked up and saw his face cleared and smiling.

"Could you—could you forgive me, Andy?"

"Yes," said Andy. "It's all right about that. Back to the cemetery with the Count. You've straightened everything out, Maggie. I was in hopes you would before the wedding-day. You're a dear girl!"

"Andy," said Maggie, with a somewhat shy smile, after she had been thoroughly assured of forgiveness, "did you believe all that story about the Count?"

"Well, not to any large extent," said Andy, reaching for his cigar-case; "because it's Big Mike Sullivan's picture you've got in that locket of yours."

(Two more of these sketches will appear next month.)

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A Revolution in Rowing.

By T. H. BRIGG, Mechanical Engineer.

"A REVOLUTION in Rowing" is a bold title. Many readers will be inclined to doubt whether it can be justified. I will begin, therefore, by quoting the opinion of one of England's most eminent professors, Mr. John Goodman, Professor of Engineering in the Leeds University.

"How interesting!" he exclaimed, after seeing my diagrams and photographs of the Oxford and Cambridge crews—labouring, as I pointed out, under very serious mechanical and bodily disadvantages, unconsciously self-imposed for want of a better knowledge and application of the eternal laws of Nature. "Just think of it! We have been accustomed all our lives to descriptions and photographs of the Boat Race, and yet what you have observed from these photographs has never occurred to us!"

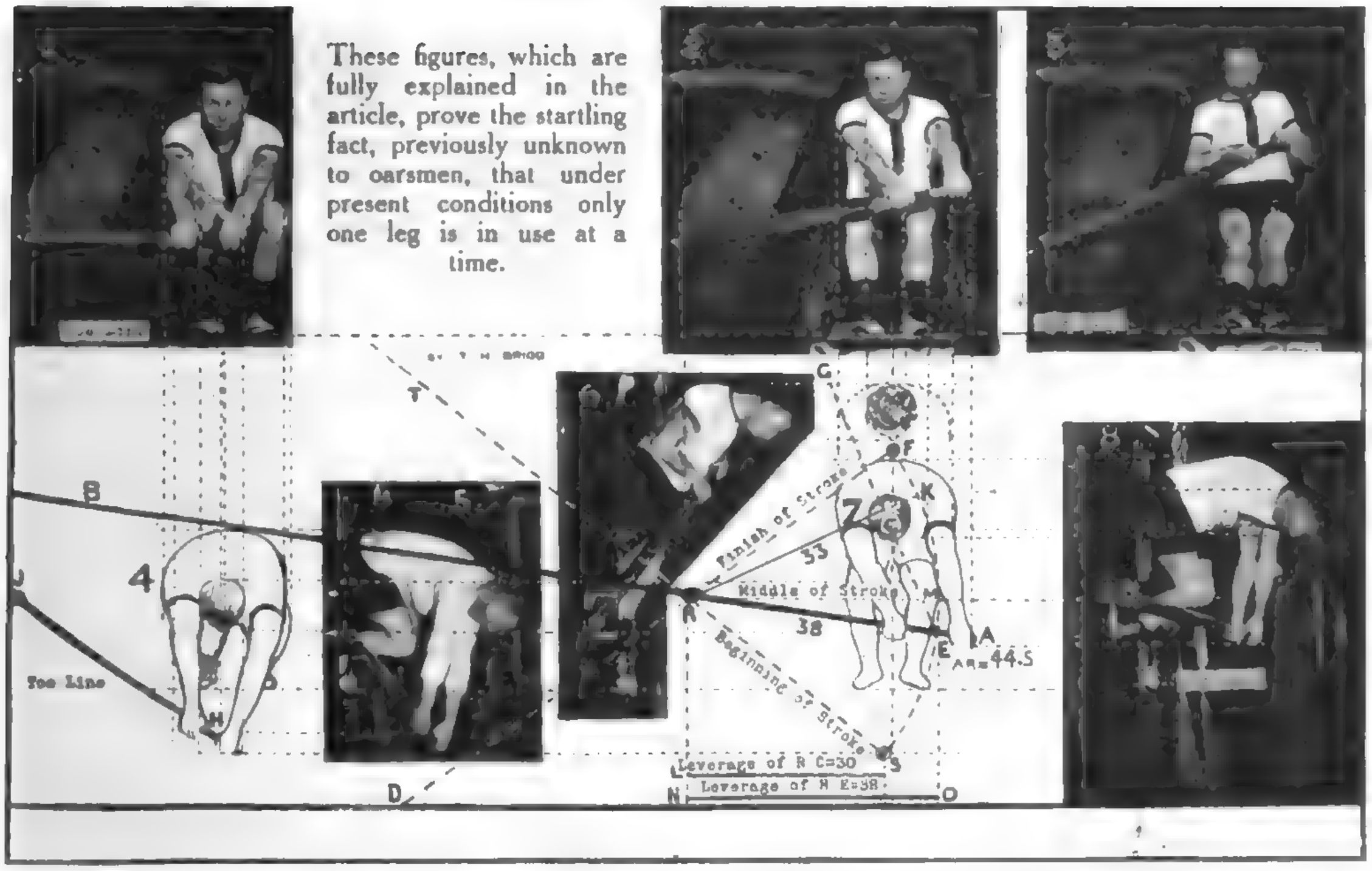
Never occurred to the mathematicians of the great Universities of this country—or, indeed, of any other—to apply their learning to the solution of the problem as to whether their respective crews were, or were not, putting forth their forces to their best advantage!

For whatever reason, they have failed to do so. It is a fact that the design of a racing-boat, of a common farm-wagon, or of a locomotive engine, despite all our mathematics, is almost as dependent to-day upon rule-of-thumb guidance as ever. We have no mechanical text-books in our own language—or in any other—teaching the scientific application of the forces of a racing-boat's crew; the suspension of a load on a simple horse-drawn vehicle; or that of a locomotive on its wheels. Can we wonder, therefore, at the words of the President of the Cambridge Rowing Club when he publicly stated that he thinks "a great deal of the bad rowing at Cambridge is due to faulty instruction"? Faulty instruction is the child of defective knowledge.

Here, for a first example, is a case in point. I have had the pleasure of meeting eminent coaches in England, America, and Germany. Strangely enough, they have all been unconscious, until I demonstrated the fact, that every member of a racing crew has been placed in boats under conditions which make it absolutely impossible for any man to rely, at the most crucial part of the stroke, upon the muscular impelling capacity of both his legs. Quite unconsciously, *he is making use of one leg only*.

I will now proceed to demonstrate this fact by the aid of the first set of diagrams and photographs (Figs. 1 to 8). For the latter I am indebted to Mr. R. H. Forster, of the Thames Rowing Club, for his kind permission to take photographs at the Thames Rowing Tank, and to Mr. J. T. ("Bossie") Phelps, the well-known leading oarsman and trainer, who has repeatedly posed for me in order that I might be enabled to present my facts as clearly, correctly, and lucidly as possible. I first show three front and three side views, so placed in relation to each other as to enable me to determine a plan view of each attitude, with the object of resolving the respective directions of the forces at each part of the stroke and to determine the leverage which the oarsman secures at each of these periods. In the first place it will be observed that Figs. 1, 2, and 3 are all toeing the same horizontal dotted line; and in like manner the Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are toeing the horizontal dotted line drawn from 4 to 8. It is needless to explain that by the process of projecting the lines from corresponding parts of Figs. 1 and 5 we can ascertain the exact plan view of the man, showing the relative positions of hands and feet, so as to enable us to see to what extent the lines of force deviate from each other; or as to whether they are directly in line. We see they are not in line, and that at the beginning of the stroke the greater part of the impelling force is consequently exerted by the right leg. When we come to the middle of the stroke, as shown in Fig. 7, projected from Figs. 2 and 8, we find that the line of pull through the arms is a long way outside the left foot—and that the left foot becomes the centre of moments about which the man tends at this i s a t to be rotated; which foot is consequently effecting every ounce of force which the man is putting forth. This figure also indicates that the oar is fast approaching the middle of the stroke, when the oarsman should be putting forth the very maximum of his impelling force under the most economic and humane conditions. But, alas! he is suffering, as it were, the loss of an amputated leg,

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which is left in the boat as useless weight, *retarding*, instead of being able to quicken, the speed of it; for at one point of the stroke only—under present conditions—can the muscles of both legs be brought, momentarily, into simultaneous action.

"Ah!" the reader will exclaim. "This may be all very well in theory, but it is impossible that rowing men, in actual practice, can have remained in total ignorance of a fact so startling as that they were using one leg instead of two." It *seems* impossible, no doubt. But read the following letters, which resulted from certain practical experiments which I conducted at the Thames Rowing Tank—this time with no other than Mr. Ernest Barry, the world's champion sculler, who was profoundly amazed at the results obtained, as can be judged from the letter which he signed, and which was countersigned by Mr. Matt. Wood:—

February 1st, 1913.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. T. H. Brigg to-day at the above concern (Messrs. Bower and Phelps'), and after discussing his claims I accompanied him and Mr. Phelps to the Thames Rowing Tank, and there found, when pulling with all my might at the middle of the stroke, that the total leg thrust was, to my surprise, *entirely* upon the outside leg. Mr. Brigg then placed his hand between my inside foot and the stretcher, and asked me to push at it as hard as I could. I tried, but I could not pin it. In fact, Mr. Brigg moved his hand up and down during my heaviest pull, the blade of the oar being held at the time to enable me to effect a long, continuous pull.

(Signed) ERNEST BARRY.

Countersigned by eye-witness.

(Signed) MATT. WOOD.

Now let the reader pass on to the following letter, on the same subject, from Mr. J. T. ("Bossie") Phelps:—

February 3rd, 1913.

I have been interested in what Mr. T. H. Brigg has had to say about the science of rowing, and I must confess he has brought to light some very startling facts which I am sure must, sooner or later, lead to quite a revolution, both in the design of racing-boats, the rigging measurements and adjustments, and in the style of rowing. Although I am an admitted leading sculler of the present day in all parts of the world, and have rowed all my life, I must confess, as many of my friends have had to confess, that, until Mr. Brigg proved to the contrary, I was always under the impression that all oarsmen do fairly even work with both their legs. Now, however, there is absolutely no doubt about it, for I have proved that Mr. Brigg is right in saying it is *impossible* for any man with a single oar, of present dimensions, to work with both legs alike; for nearly the whole of the stroke is done with one leg.

Only the other day my friend, Mr. Ernest Barry, champion of the world, was put to the same test in my presence, and frankly admitted the startling fact.

(Signed) J. T. PHELPS.

In reference to Fig. 7, point R is the centre of effort at the rowlock, and the arc S E K is the line of traverse effected by the outer hand of the oarsman, while S F is the centre line of the sliding seat. It is also the line through which the man's centre of gravity should move to and fro in order to enable him to exert his forces most evenly, most economically, and most efficiently; but the conditions under which he labours will not permit of this. Just look at the enormous overlap of the inboard end of the oar beyond the line S F, confirmed by the drawing from a photo-

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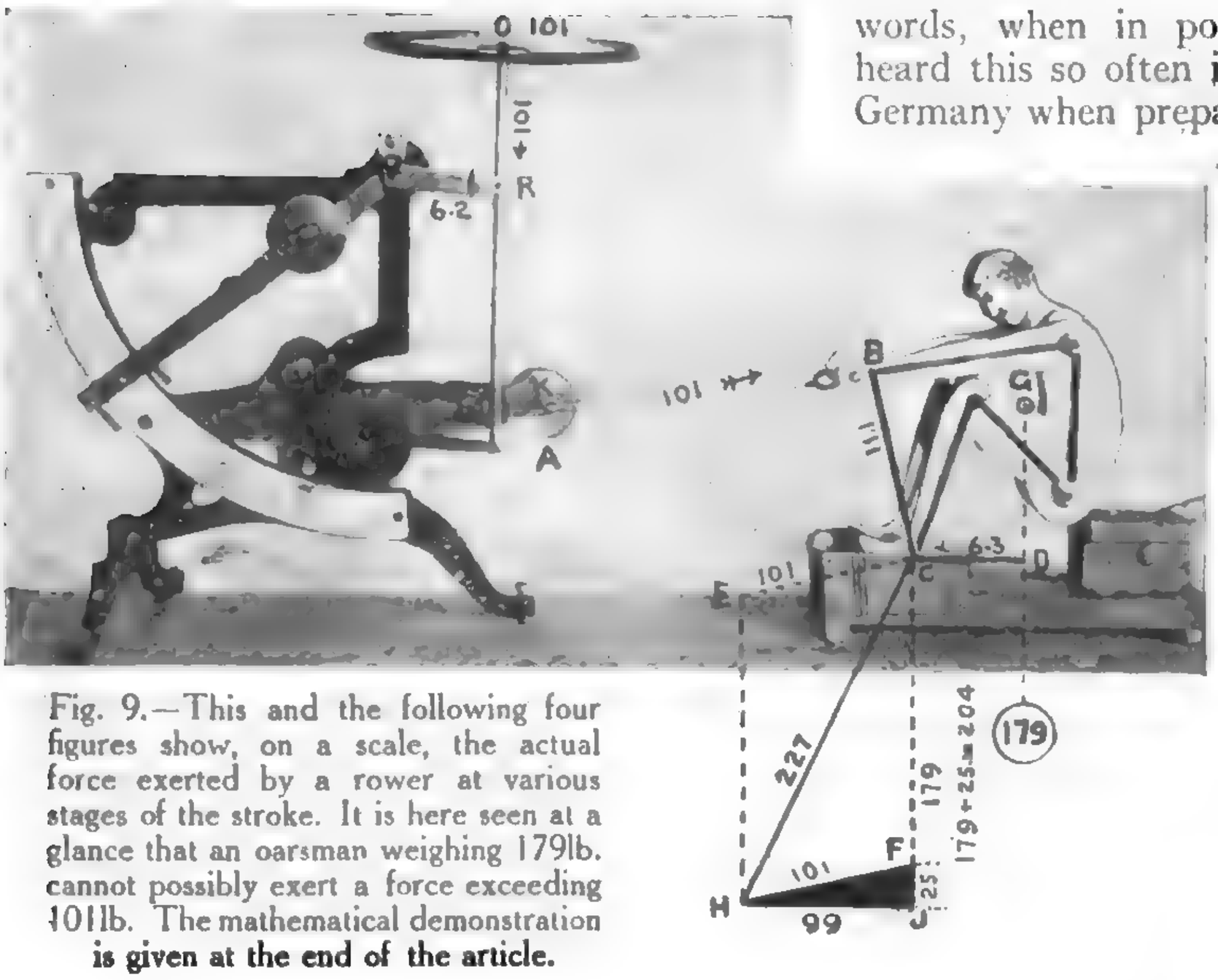


Fig. 9.—This and the following four figures show, on a scale, the actual force exerted by a rower at various stages of the stroke. It is here seen at a glance that an oarsman weighing 179lb. cannot possibly exert a force exceeding 101lb. The mathematical demonstration **is given at the end of the article.**

graph, Fig. 16, where it is clearly seen that these ends actually reach to points *outside* the shell of the boat on both sides. These men are forced to rely, not only upon the muscles of one leg each, but upon a very materially shorter leverage than the actual measurement (44·5 inches) of R A—*i.e.*. L S (30 inches) at the beginning of the stroke, and N O (38 inches) at about the middle. The conclusion to be arrived at is, briefly, that, in order to obtain the impelling force of both legs, the length of the inboard end of the oar and the location of the rowlock should be such as will enable the oarsman to effect his pull in a line as directly over the centre line of the sliding seat, and of his own body, as possible.

Another erroneous impression is held which I have frequently heard of, and have as frequently refuted. It is that an oarsman can exert the greatest impelling force when at the beginning of the stroke, or, in other words, when in position Fig. 5. Having heard this so often in England and again in Germany when preparing to deliver a lecture at the Königl. Technischen Hochschule zu Charlottenburg, in the year 1910, I determined to arrange some method of enabling me to *practically* demonstrate the actual facts. I bought a German force testing apparatus as depicted in Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. I also made a wooden man with adjustable joints, so as to enable me to place him in any admittedly natural position from the beginning to the finish of the stroke, and even beyond, in order to give indisputable ocular proof of what a man can do and what he cannot. In short, my experiments with this model and with the two instructors—Mr. W. Düskow and Mr. Paul Heyn—of the Berlin Rowing Club, so impressed them that the latter gentleman promised to speak at the conclusion of my lecture at the above University, giving the result of his practical tests at Wansee, which confirmed my own views.

The figures, with their titles, require no mathematical knowledge. But for the mathematician I should like to briefly explain the resultant forces exerted through the man's arms

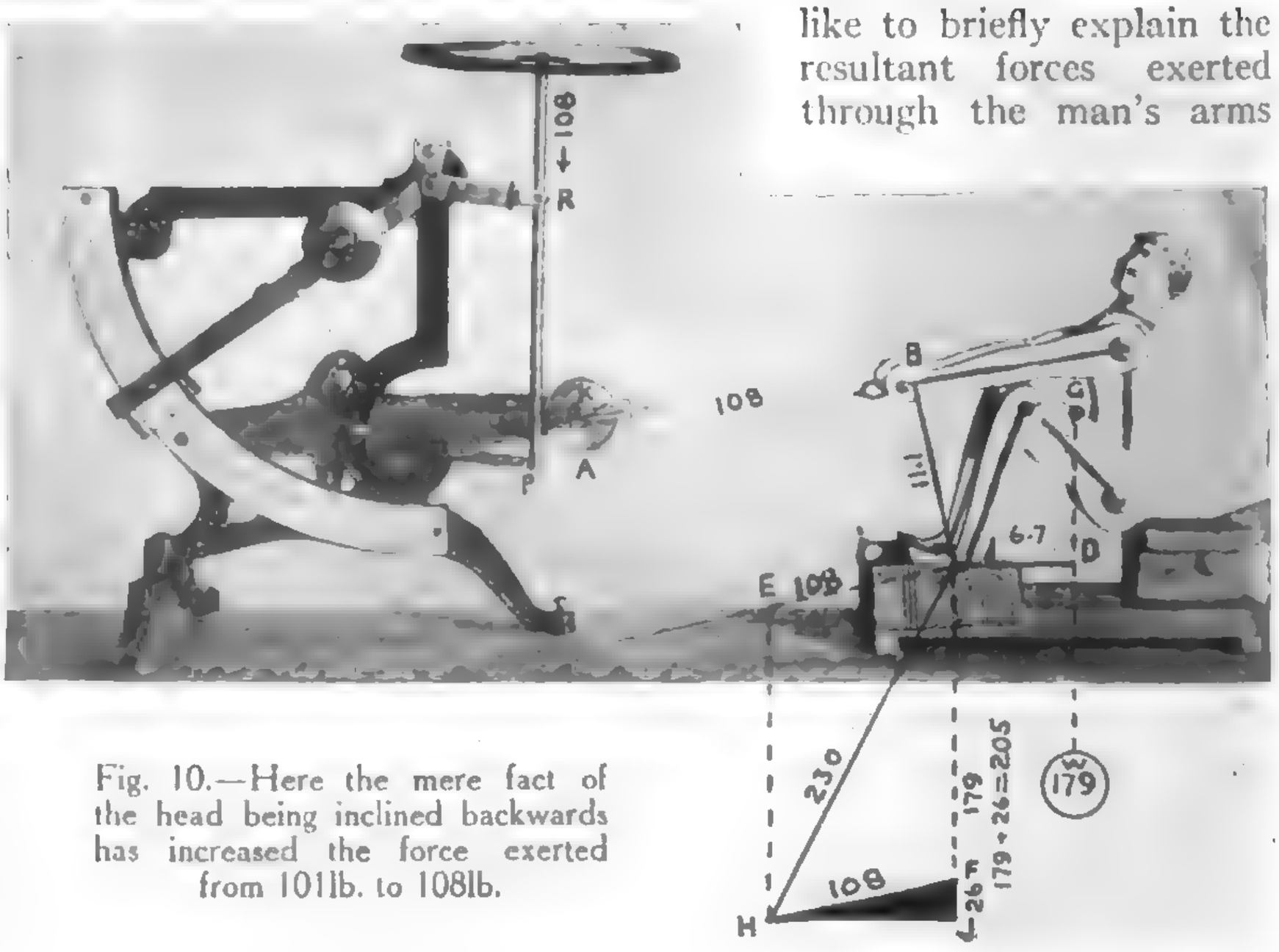


Fig. 10.—Here the mere fact of the head being inclined backwards has increased the force exerted from 101lb. to 108lb.

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and legs in the figures mentioned. I will put this demonstration in small type at the end of my article, so that the ordinary reader can conveniently "skip" it.

Another thing we ought to know something more about is this: What is the best and most efficient length of stroke? Well, the best length of stroke is variable, and can only be fairly determined by a man who combines knowledge with practice. For instance, at the starting-point it is best to exert a long, strong, powerful pull in order to change the total mass-load (nearly two thousand pounds) from a state of rest to that of motion, because at that time the oarsman has got well hold of the water; but as the velocity increases the time comes when, with a long stroke, involving such an enormous amount of body-work under wrong conditions, it will be found that, when the boat is travelling quickly, the limit of propelling power is reached sooner with a continuance of a long stroke than with a shorter one. Let me call attention to the fact that at the beginning and at the finish of a long stroke there is a very appreciable difference of propelling power, apart from the conditions set forth in Figs. 9 to 13. I am unwilling to give further diagrams in this article, but it can be demonstrated that at the beginning and end of the stroke—when the boat is travelling fast—each man is doing something to *retard* the progress of the boat. For this reason it is important to consider the design and length of the blades. It is easy to imagine the importance of so shortening the length of the stroke as to materially lessen the throw and recovery of the heavy upper part of the body, substituting for it the comparatively easy and rapid movement of the arms and legs in such a manner and extent as to cause the blade to catch, as it were, the receding water—and thus to effect a quick, and therefore greater, impelling force. An oarsman must not only "catch up" with the receding water—I use this term because there is no difference between the boat passing the water and the water passing the boat at a given rate—but the pressure against it must be equal to the resistance of wind and water to the progress of the boat, or the speed *will be reduced*. The shorter the outboard end of the oars, and the longer the inboard, the greater and more rapid must be the body-motion.

I think it will be found that, when the boat is making good speed, the best results accrue from the shorter stroke effected as follows. Do not attempt to dip the oar until the leg muscles have set the lower portion of the body in a backward movement, allowing, for the moment, the shoulders to lag behind, so that when the lower portion of the body has been set in motion the spinal muscles are brought into operation in throwing back the shoulders with the greatest possible velocity and power. Simultaneously with this operation, in order still further to accelerate the velocity imparted to the blade contract the arm muscles so as to secure a threefold accumulative velocity—first, by the expansion of the leg muscles; second, by the straightening and throwing back of the shoulders; and, finally, by the sudden contraction of the arm muscles. Thus a great velocity is imparted to the blade of the oar, which will far exceed that at which the boat is progressing.

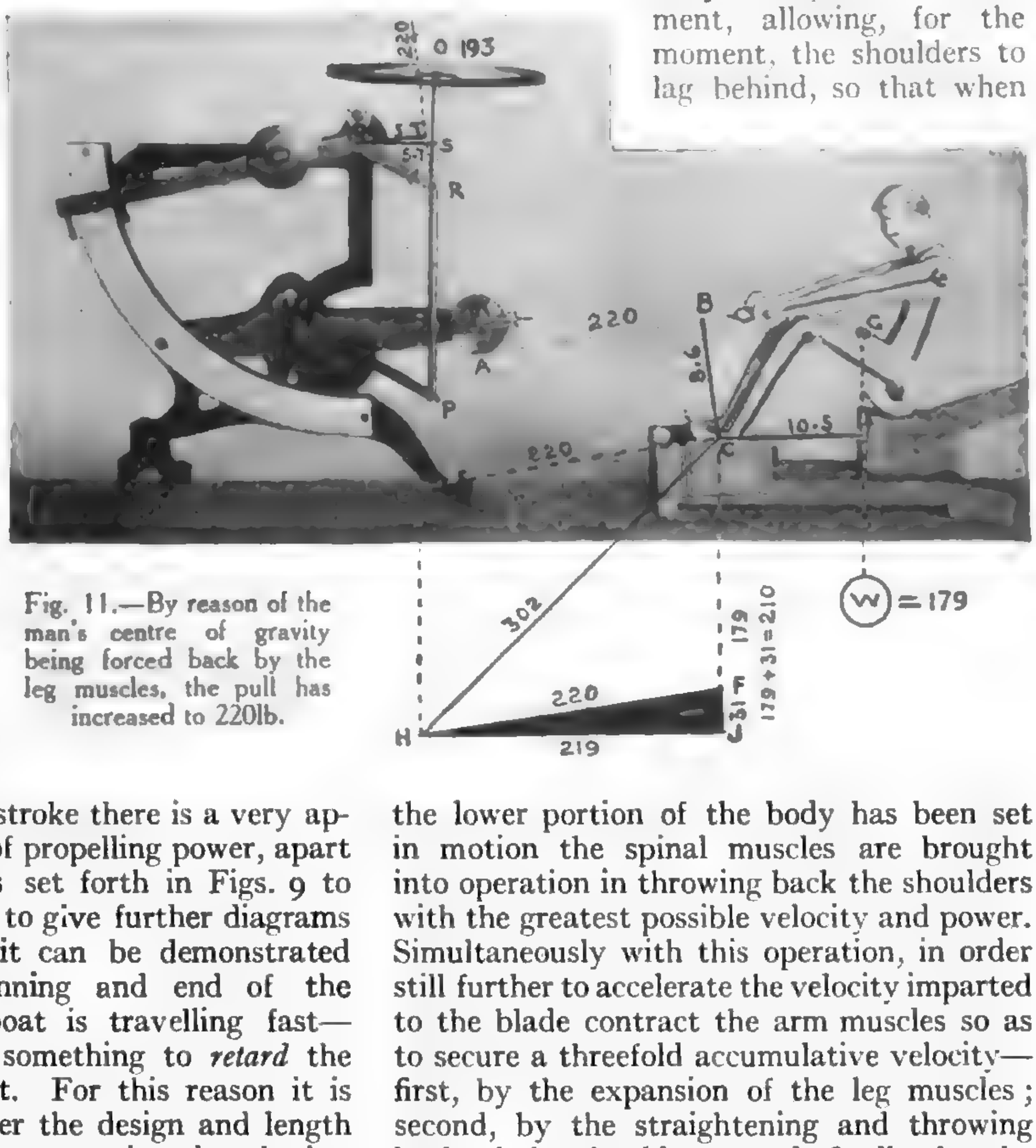


Fig. 11.—By reason of the man's centre of gravity being forced back by the leg muscles, the pull has increased to 220lb.

I have now indicated a few points in which the opinions and the practice of rowing men are not based on scientific knowledge, and are, in consequence, erroneous. It is impossible within the limits of a single article to do more than this. My chief hope is to draw

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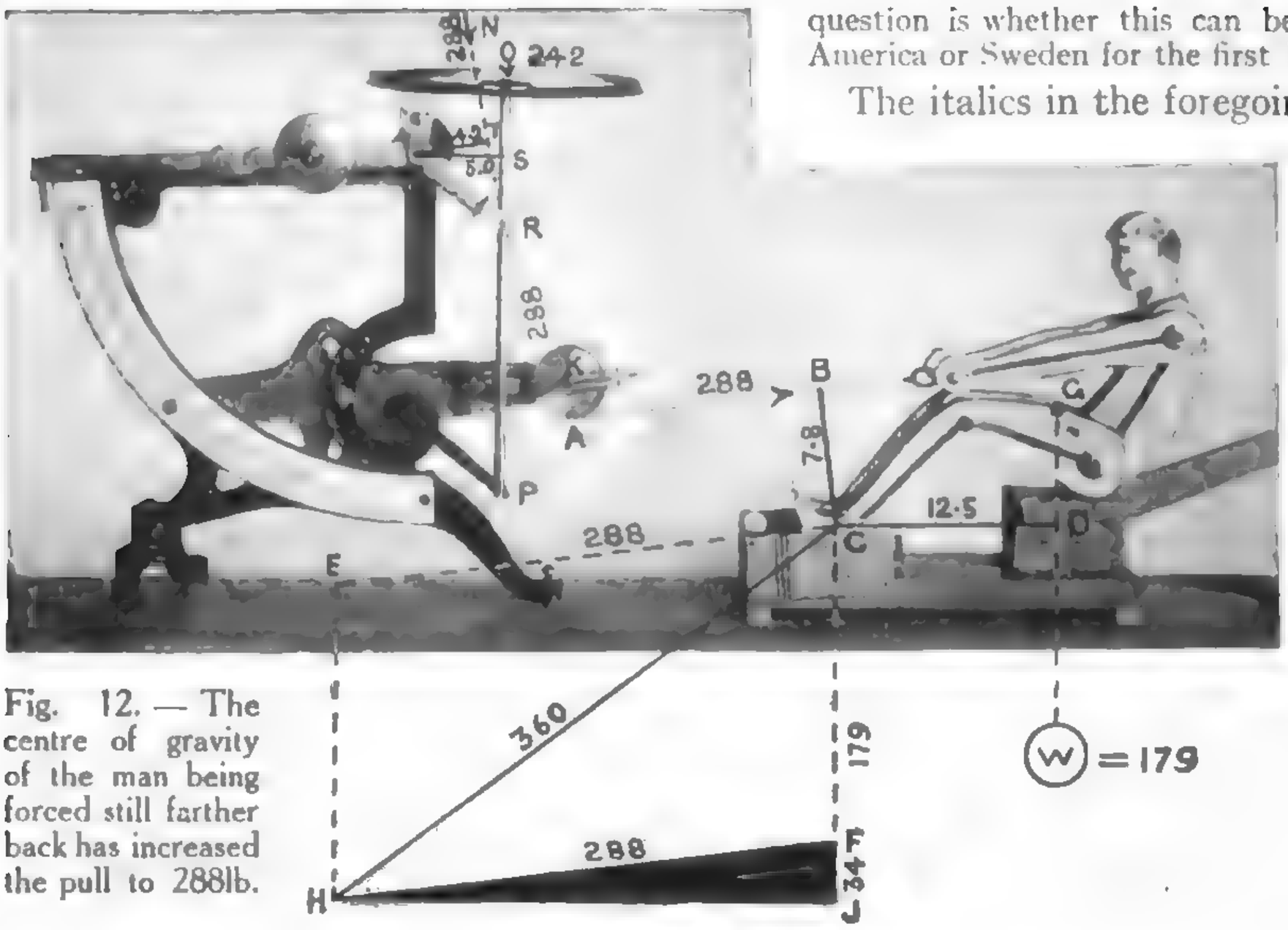


Fig. 12. — The centre of gravity of the man being forced still farther back has increased the pull to 288lb.

attention to the subject, which I propose dealing with more elaborately in a pictorial textbook, which I am now compiling, on the science of locomotion generally. How little rowing experts are alive to the true state of their knowledge may be well shown by the following statement, recently published by Mr. W. Beach Thomas, ex-president of the Oxford University Athletic Club :—

Both the Germans and the Swedes are going direct to Americans for information on the arts of throwing, jumping, and especially running. Photographs are being taken of the right attitudes as practised by the record-makers, and even men of science are being called in to work out formulæ of stress and energy and acceleration. We saw at Stockholm last year that it is as useless for us to compete against people who study the questions in this way as it would be to try to play the fiddle without a specialist's help in technique.

Now comes a statement strangely at issue with my views :—

We have only really studied the art of rowing in a scientific way, and the organizer of the new cult of athletics desires above all else to set athletes working in the right style, *as are all our rowing men*. The greatly discussed question is whether this can be done without going to America or Sweden for the first lessons.

The italics in the foregoing are mine.

I have just returned from a most memorable visit to America, where I have spent several years from time to time in connection with my research work, and in direct contact with the most eminent professors of the Universities of that country, who have been deeply impressed with my discoveries ; but, notwithstanding this fact and my appreciation of their open-mindedness and readiness to depart from old theories, I must confess, in fairness to our own professors, they know no more of the fundamental mechanical principles involved in either rowing, horse-riding, running, jumping, and so forth than in this country, which is practically nil. In that country's vast cosmopolitan population of all classes and characters of men there are always some who are ever ready to do and try all manner of ways and means to accomplish their ends—some by dint of perseverance, and others by instinct and natural ability ; but, when accomplished, they are just as ignorant of the principles which have brought about the desired effect as anybody else, for the science of these subjects is neither taught

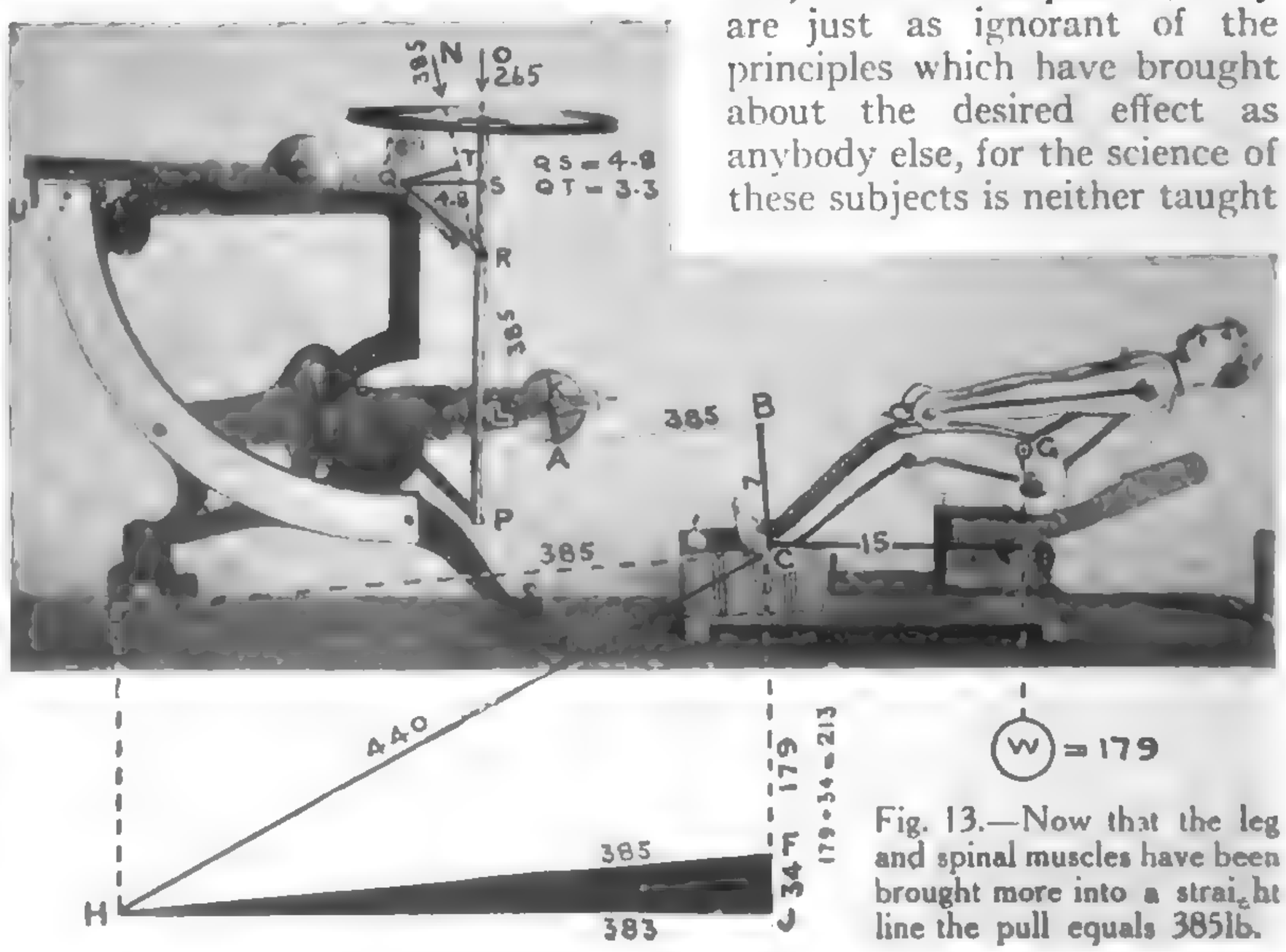


Fig. 13.—Now that the leg and spinal muscles have been brought more into a straight line the pull equals 385lb.

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ROWING FORCE DEMONSTRATOR.

Fig. 14.—The water resistance of two forces (32lb. each) at right angles with the oars, A B and C D, at the beginning of the stroke yields only 50lb. of impelling force, as registered.

GREAT LOSS.

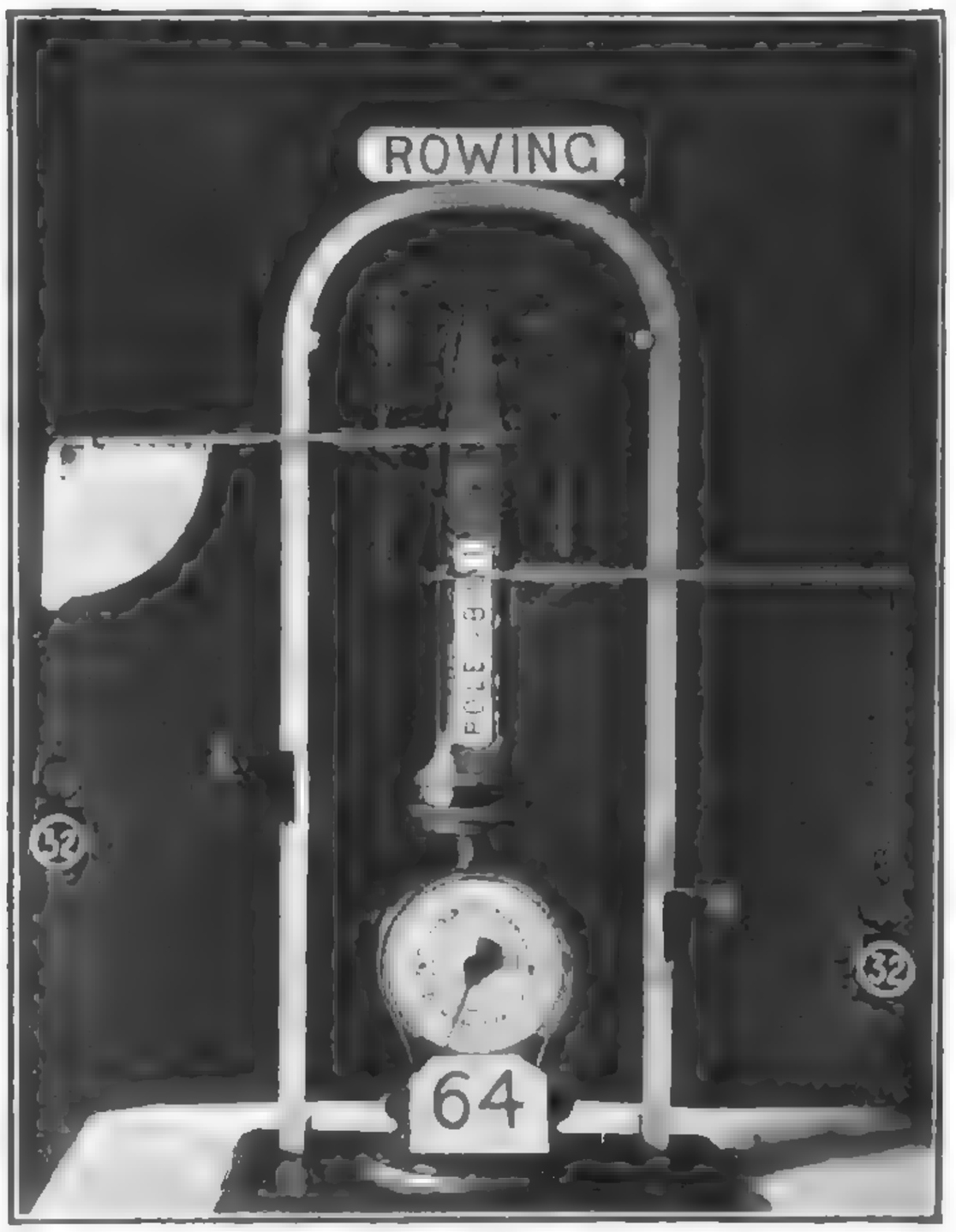


Fig. 15.—The water resistance of two forces (32lb. each) at right angles with the oars, A B and C D, at the middle of the stroke now registers 64lb. of impelling force.

NO LOSS.

nor understood any more in their Universities than in our own.

When a man is first taught to understand a principle, is it not certain that when he knows what to aim at he will naturally exercise his energies more economically and efficiently than by groping in the dark? Every man possessed of common sense must know that to act in perfect accord with natural law will be to secure the very maximum of efficiency, whereas to violate that law he must pay the penalty of inefficiency.

If a jockey desires to retard the speed of his horse, let him sit near the animal's tail. If he desires to get the most speed, then—provided the ground is not too slippery—let him sit as far forward and low down as possible. By the latter plan he causes the animal to exert his propelling force more nearly parallel with the plane upon which he is moving.

If a running man wishes to effect the quickest possible start, he must get his centre of gravity as low as his physical condition and the state of the ground upon which his rear foot rests will permit.

If a rowing man wishes to make the quickest and easiest progress, he also should be taught the fundamental principle involved in the above illustrations, because the same principle affects him at every stroke in proportion to the relative altitudes of the centre of gravity of the mass-load and the depth of immersion of the oars.

The following is the demonstration of the resultant forces exerted through the man's arms and legs in Figs. 9 to 13.

The man weighs 179lb. His centre of gravity is at G in each experiment. Point C is the centre of moments about which the two forces G W and B A tend to rotate the man's bodily weight. The bent lever B C D is, in each case, the lever constituted by (a) the location of G, and (b) by the direction of the force B A relative to the centre of moments C. The man's body constitutes these levers. Take Fig. 9, for instance, and draw C D to, and at right angles with, G W, then C D (6·3) will represent *one* arm of the said lever, while a line drawn from C to, and at right angles with, the direction of force B A, then B C will represent the second arm (11·1). Therefore, the *limit* of pull which it is possible for that man to exert will be $\frac{W\ (179) \times C\ D\ (6{\cdot}3)}{C\ B\ (11{\cdot}1)} = 101$lb., which is registered by the quadrant; and at this moment the total weight has been transferred from his seat to his feet, plus that which is due to the obliquely upward pull which he is effecting. I would here state that although the man may be strong enough to exert three times more force through his arms, yet if his weight is in equilibrium he cannot possibly exert any more force by the further contraction of his arm muscles without toppling

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forward. In this example you will observe that the head is forward. And in the next experiment, Fig. 10, the only change between it and the first one is that I merely throw the head backward. This means, of course, that the centre of gravity of the man's weight *must* in consequence be also thrown slightly farther back, with the result that the line of gravity G W is removed to a point causing C D to measure 6·7 as against 6·3 in the previous example. The length of C B, however, has not been affected, so that $\frac{W\ (179) \times C\ D\ (67)}{C\ B\ (11{\cdot}1)}$ now equals 108lb., the pull which the man can exert showing an increase of 7lb. by the above simple change.

In our next experiment, while we determine the forces which the man can now exert, by precisely the same reasoning it is particularly noteworthy that, while in the two previous examples the register on the quadrant is as nearly as possible 101lb. and 108lb., there is no lateral component force, and therefore no loss of vertical pull through P R. This can be measured, because the line of pull is effected by the cord which leaves the guide-pulley K in a line parallel with, and attached to, the connecting rod P O at point R. But in each of the following figures, 11, 12, and 13, you will find that, as the two parallel bars Q R and X P are deflected more and more by the increased downward pull, the line of pull L R becomes more and more oblique, and at the same time the mechanical purchase of that pull, or force, at the extremity of the lever Q R—like the pull at an oblique oar—becomes less and less as its obliquity increases. This important feature will be demonstrated as we go on. For instance, in Fig. 11 the man now pulls with a force of 220, as against 108 in the last example, and yet only 193 is registered on the quadrant. This discrepancy, followed by still greater ones in Figs. 12 and 13, caused me no little trouble to find out *how* it came about that out of 220 exerted through A B, only 193 were registered on the quadrant as shown on the diagram Fig. 11. Then, in the next tests, Figs. 12 and 13, we find that only 242 and 265 were registered out of 288 and 385 respectively It soon occurred to me, however, how these discrepancies were accounted for, and a more convincing illustration of the importance of a wise application of force and of limiting the length of stroke would indeed be difficult to find. Let Q R (6·3) represent the length of the inboard end of the oar with the force applied at right angles thereto at R, as in Figs. 9 and 10, you will find no loss of force through R P. But in Fig. 13 the force (through L R) is no longer at right angles with Q R, and when the actual leverage is resolved, as shown, it is not 6·3 against another of equal length which is pressing down at R, in a direction at right angles with the connecting rod, but only Q T, 3·3, against Q S, 4·8. These simple illustrations, therefore, not only conclusively prove that a man *cannot possibly* exert anything like so much force at the beginning of the stroke as he can at the later periods shown, but they point to the advisability of shortening the stroke to the most effective length.

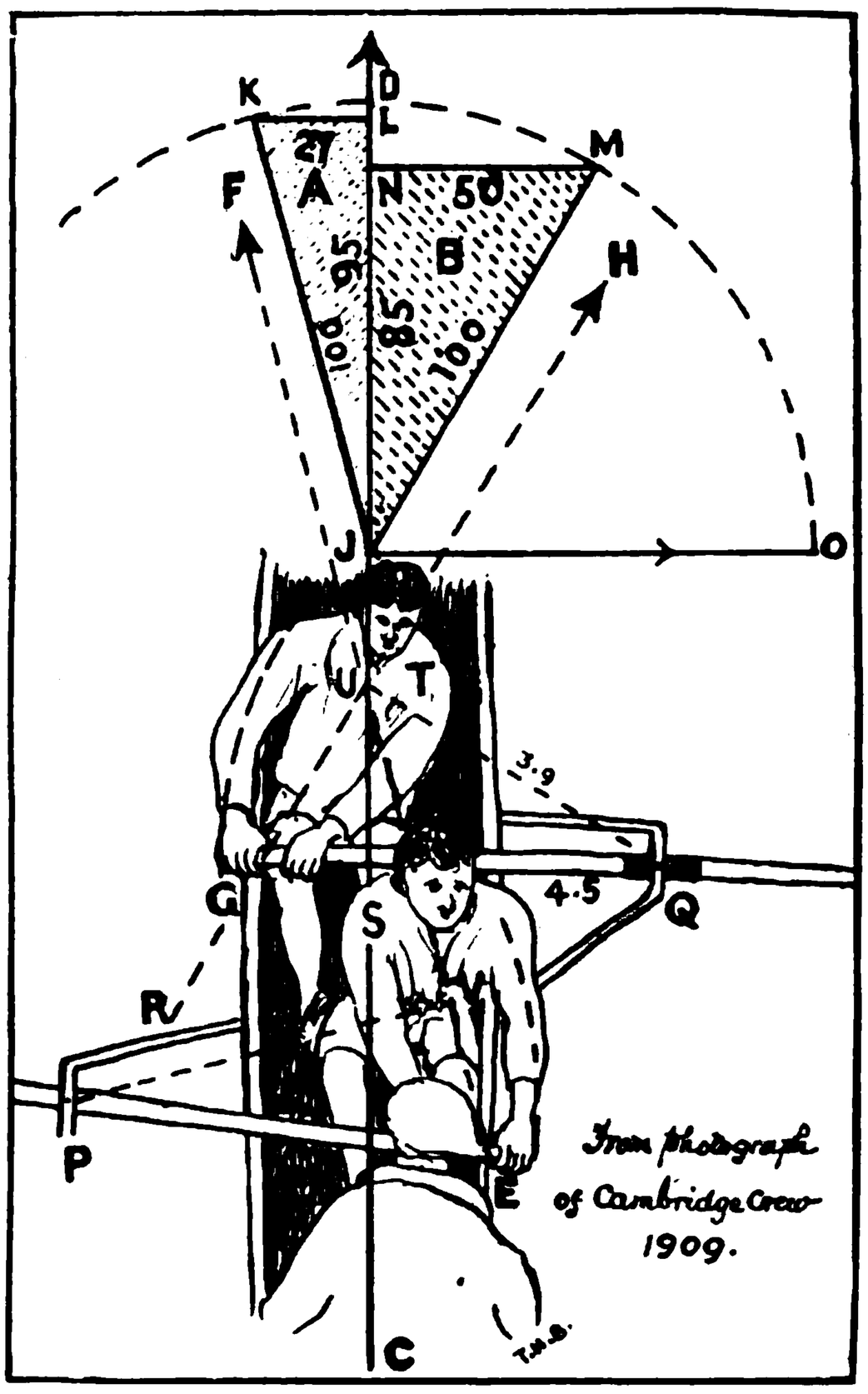


Fig. 16. — The waste of force under present conditions.

By reference to Fig. 16, we find that for every 100lb. exerted by the man T in the direction G H, which shall be represented by the hypotenuse of the right-angled triangle B, we ascertain that only (J N) 85lb. is exerted in the desired direction of motion, while the lateral component of J M (100lb.) is M N, which equals 50lb. waste effort, except when a *turning* moment is required. In the case of the stroke who happens to be pulling in a line E F parallel with J K (100lb.) he would only secure 95lb. of working efficiency. So that again we must be impressed with the truth and wisdom of applying our forces in the line of least resistance.

In order to *practically* demonstrate the propelling efficiency of any given force at right angles with the radial line of the oars, I constructed the apparatus illustrated in Figs. 14 and 15. In the former I show a couple of oars at an angle as nearly as possible equal to the one at which the beginning of the stroke is effected. From the outward ends of these I run cords at right angles over friction pulleys and attach weights, each exerting a 32lb. pull at the extremities of the two oars which shall for the moment represent the water resistance at the beginning of the stroke, and yet, as you see, there is only a propelling efficiency of 50lb. out of the 64lb., whereas in Fig. 15, where the oars are at right angles with the keel of the boat, you will find that for every 64lb. at the blades there is a propelling effort of a like number of pounds, without *any* loss, as seen registered on the apparatus.

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THE WOOING OF WEE MACGREEGOR.

By J. J. BELL.

Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

[Most of us have a warm place in our hearts for Wee Macgreegor and Christina, those delightful children whose sayings and doings Mr. J. J. Bell has described in two of his best-known books. Unlike Peter Pan, however, they have not refused to grow up, and now Mr. Bell has carried out the happy idea of bringing them together into one story, in which he relates, with a charm and humour that go straight to the heart of the reader, the joys and trials of their courtship.]



SECOND PART.

VII.

"YE'VE been in business a long time, Miss Tod," said Christina on Monday afternoon, looking up from the front advertising page of a newspaper; "so I wish ye wud tell me yer honest opinion o' business in general."

M. Tod paused in the act of polishing a fancy inkpot (she had spasms of industry for which there was no need) and stared in bewildered fashion at her assistant.

"I'll put it anither way. Supposin' ye was back at the schule, an' ye was asked to define business—ye ken what define means—what wud be yer answer?"

"Is it fun ye're after?" M. Tod inquired, a trifle suspiciously.

"I was never mair serious in ma life," Christina returned, rather indignantly. "I merely desired to know if your definition of business was the same as mine."

It always made M. Tod a little nervous when her assistant addressed her in such correct speech. "Business," she began, and halted. She set the inkpot on the counter, and tried to put the duster in her pocket.

"A few words will suffice," the girl remarked, encouragingly, and took charge of the duster.

"Business," resumed the old woman, and quite unconsciously put her hands behind her back, "business is jist buyin' and sellin'." And she gave a little smile of relief and satisfaction.

"In *ma* honest opinion business chiefly consists in folk coddin' yin anither."

M. Tod gasped. "Coddin'! D'ye mean deceivin'?"

"Na; there's a difference between coddin' an' deceivin'. Same sort o' difference as between war an' murder. Mind ye, I'm no' saying onything against coddin'. We're a' in the same boat. Some cods wi' advertisin'—see daily papers; some cods wi' talk; some cods wi' lookin' solemn an' smilin' jist at the right times. But we're a' coddin', cod, cod, coddin'!"

The old woman was almost angry. "I'm sure I never codded a customer in ma life," she cried.

Christina regarded her very kindly for a second or two ere she returned, pleasantly: "I wudna say but what you're an exception to the rule, Miss Tod. But ye're a rare

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exception. There's nae doobt," she went on, calmly ignoring M. Tod's obvious desire to get a word in, "there's nae doobt that coddin' is yin o' the secrets o' success. When ye consider that half the trade o' the world consists in sellin' things that folk dinna need an' whiles dinna want——"

"Whisht, lassie! Ye speak as if naebody had a conscience!"

Christina sighed, a little impatiently, and picked up the fancy inkpot from the counter. "Hoo lang hae ye had this in the shop?" she inquired, carelessly.

M. Tod shook her head. "Ten years, onyway. It wudna sell. It's no' pretty."

"It's ugly—but that's nae reason for it no' sellin'." Christina examined the glass carefully. "It's no' in bad condition," she observed. "Wud ye part wi' it for ninepence?"

"Ninepence! I'll never get ninepence!"

"Never say die till ye're buried! Jist wait a minute." Christina went over to the desk and spent about three minutes there, while M. Tod watched her with intermittent wags of her old head.

The girl came back with a small oblong of white card. "Dinna touch it, Miss Tod. The ink's no' dry," she said, warningly, and proceeded to place the inkpot and card together in a prominent position on the glass show-case that covered part of the counter. "Ye'll get yer ninepence yet."

The card bore these words:—

ANTIQUE
NOVEL GIFT
MERELY 9D.

"If ye call a thing 'antique'," explained Christina, "folk forget its ugliness. An' the public likes a thing wi' 'novel' on it, though they wudna believe ye if ye said it was new. An' as for 'gift'—weel, that adds to the inkpot's chances o' findin' a customer. D'ye see?"

"Aye," said the old woman. "Ye're a clever lassie, but I doobt ye'll never get ninepence."

"Gie me a week," said Christina, "an' if it doesna disappear in that time, we'll keep it till Christmas an' reduce it to a shillin'."

It may have been that Christina, at the back of her mind, saw in Macgregor a possible customer for the ugly inkpot. At any rate, she was disappointed when the evening passed without his entering the shop; she hoped she had not spoken too plainly to him on his last visit—not but what he needed plain speaking.

It was not until Saturday afternoon that they met once more. Macgregor held aloof from the shop until M. Tod appeared—of course, she was later than usual!—and, after an anxious gaze at the sky, proceeded to toddle up the street. Then he approached his desire. He was feeling fairly hopeful. Moreover, he had saved during the week fourpence in car-money and had spent nothing. He had tenpence in his pocket—wealth!

Christina was perched at the desk, writing with much diligence.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Robinson," she said, demurely.

If anyone else in the world had called him "Mister Robinson" he would have resented it as chaff; but now, though taken aback, he felt no annoyance.

"Aye, it's a fine day," he returned, rather irrelevantly, and suddenly held out his hand.

This was a little more than Christina had expected, but she gave him hers with the least possible hesitation.

"I've been workin' late every day this week excep' Tuesday," he said.

For an instant Christina looked pleased; then she calmly murmured: "Oh, indeed."

He struggled against a curious feeling of mental suffocation, and said: "I was in here on Tuesday nicht. I—I didna see ye."

"I attend a shorthand class on Tuesday nights."

"Oh!" He wanted very much to make her smile, so he said: "When I didna see ye on Tuesday, I was afraid ye had got the sack."

Christina drew herself up. "What can I do for you to-day, Mr. Robinson?" she inquired, with stiff politeness.

"I was jist jokin'," he cried, dismayed; "I didna mean to offend ye."

Christina's fingers played a soundless tune on the edge of the counter; her eyes gazed over his head into space. She waited with an air of weary patience.

"I was wantin' a pen—a penholder," he said, at last, in a hopeless tone of voice.

"Ha'penny or penny?" she asked, without moving.

"A penny yin, please," he said, humbly.

She turned and twitched a card from its nail, and laid it before him. "Kindly take your choice," she said, and moved up the counter a yard or so. She picked up a novelette and opened it.

Macgregor examined and fingered the penholders for nearly a minute by the clock ere he glanced at her. She appeared to be engrossed in the novelette, but he was sure he had hurt her feelings.

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"I was jist jokin'," he muttered.

"Oh, you wanted a ha'penny one." She twitched down another card of pen-holders, laid it before him as if—so it seemed to him—he had been dirt, and went back to her novelette.

Had he been less in love he would surely have been angry then. Had she seen his look she would certainly have been sorry.

recovering her dignity and moving leisurely towards him, "but I did not quite catch what you observed."

"I'll buy that," repeated Macgregor. "What's it for?"

"It's for keeping ink in. It's an inkpot. The price is ninepence."

"I can read," said Macgregor, with perhaps his first essay in irony.



"'IF YE CALL A THING "ANTIQUE,"' EXPLAINED CHRISTINA, 'FOLK FORGET ITS UGLINESS.'"

There was a long silence while his gaze wandered, while he wondered what he could do to make amends.

And, lo! the ugly inkpot caught his eye.

"I'll buy that, if ye like," he said, pointing at the inkpot.

"Eh?" cried Christina, and dropped the novelette. "Beg your pardon," she went on,

Christina tilted her chin. "I presume you want it for a gift," she said, haughtily.

"Na; I'm gaun to pay for it."

"I meant to give away as a gift." It was rather a stupid sentence, she felt. If only she had remembered to use the word "bestow."

The boy's clear eyes met hers for a second.

"It holds a great deal of ink," she said, possibly in reply to her conscience.

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"I'll buy a bottle o' ink, too, if ye like," he said, recklessly, and looked at her again.

A flood of honest kindliness swamped the business instinct of Christina. "I didna mean that!" she exclaimed, flopping into homely speech; "an' I wudna sell ye that rotten inkpot for a hundred pound!"

It will be admitted that Macgregor's amazement was natural in the circumstances.

"It's as good as sold to the Rev. Mr. McTavish," she explained. Her sole foundation for the statement lay in the fact that the Rev. Mr. McTavish was to call for a small parcel of stationery about six o'clock. At the same time she remembered her duty to her employer. "But we have other inkpots in profusion," she declared.

The limit of his endurance was reached. "Oh," he stammered, "I wish ye wudna speak to me like that."

"Like what?"

"That fancy way—that genteel English."

The words might have angered her, but not the voice. She drew a quick breath and said: "Are ye a frien' or a customer?"

"Ye—ye ken fine what I want to be," he answered, sadly.

Now she was sure that she liked him.

"Well," she said, slowly, "suppose ye buy a ha'penny penholder—jist for the sake o' appearances—an' then"—quickly—"we'll drop business."

It must be recorded, however, that an hour or so later she induced the Rev. Mr. McTavish to buy the ugly inkpot.

"It wasna easy," she confessed afterwards to M. Tod, "an' I doobt he jist bought it to please me; but it's awa' at last, an' ye'll never see it again, unless at a jumble sale."

VIII.

For a fortnight it ran smoothly enough. There were, to be sure, occasional ripples: little doubts, little fears, little jealousies: but they passed as swiftly as they appeared.

It must not be supposed, all the same, that she gave him much direct encouragement; her lapses from absolute discretion were brief as they were rare. But the affections of the youthful male have a wonderful way of subsisting on crumbs whichhope magnifies into loaves. Nevertheless, her kindliness was a definite thing, and under its influence the boy lost some of his shyness and gained a little confidence in himself. He had already taken a leap over one barrier of formality: he had called her "Christina" to her face, and neither her eyes nor her lips had reproved him; he had asked her to call him "Macgreegor"—or "Mac" if she preferred it—and she had promised to "see about it."



On this November Saturday afternoon he was on his way to make the tremendous request that she should allow him to walk home with her when her day's work was over. He was far from sure of himself.

He broke his journey at a sweet-shop, and rather surprised himself by spending sixpence, although he had been planning to do so for the past week. He had not yet given Christina anything; he wanted badly to give her something; and having bought it, he wondered whether she would take it.

A few minutes later Macgregor stood at the counter that had become a veritable altar. Not many of us manage to greet the girls of our dreams precisely as we would or exactly as we have rehearsed the operation, and Macgregor's nerves at the last moment played him a trick.

In a cocky fashion, neither natural nor becoming, he wagged his head in the direction of the living-room and flippantly inquired: "Is she oot?"

To which Christina, her smile of welcome

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passing with never a flicker, stiffly replied: "Miss Tod *is* out, but may return at any moment."

"Aw!" he murmured, "I thought she wud maybe be takin' her usual walk."

"What usual walk?"

His hurt look said: "What have I done to deserve this, Christina?"

And she felt as though she had struck him. "Ye shouldna tak' things for granted," she said, less sharply. "I didna think ye was one o' the cheeky sort."

"Me!" he cried, in consternation.

"Weel, maybe ye didna mean it, but ye cam' into the shop like a dog wi' twa tails. But"—as with a sudden inspiration—"maybe ye've been gettin' a rise in yer wages. If that's the case, I'll apologize."

He shook his head. "I dinna ken what ye're drivin' at. I—I was jist gled to see ye——"

"Oh, we'll no' say ony mair aboot it. Maybe I was ower smart," she said, hastily. "Kindly forget ma observations." She smiled apologetically.

"Are ye no' gaun to shake han's wi' me?" he asked, still uneasy.

"Surely!" she answered, warmly. "An' I've got a bit o' news for ye, Mac." The name slipped out; she went pink.

Yet her cheek was pale compared with his. "Oh!" he exclaimed, under his breath. Then, with a brave attempt at carelessness, he brought from his pocket a small white package and laid it on the counter before her. "It—it's for you," he said, forgetting his little speech about wanting to give her something and hoping she would not be offended.

Christina was not prepared for such a happening; still, her wits did not desert her. She liked sweets, but on no account was she going to have her acceptance of the gift misconstrued. She glanced at Macgregor, whose eyes did not meet hers; she glanced at the package; she glanced once more at Macgregor, and gently uttered the solitary word:—

"Platonic?"

"Na," he replied. "Jujubes."

Christina bit her lip.

"D'ye no' like them?" he asked, anxiously.

The matter had got beyond her. She put out her hand and took the gift, saying: "Thank ye, Mac; they're ma favourite sweeties. But—ye're no' to dae it again."

"What kin' o' sweeties did ye think they was?" he asked, breaking a short silence.

"Oh, it's o' nae consequence," she lightly replied. "D'ye no' want to hear ma bit o' news?"

"'Deed, aye, Christina." Now more at ease, he settled himself on the chair.

"Weel ye'll excuse me no' samplin' the jujubes the noo; it might be awkward if a customer was comin'—weel, yer Uncle Purdie was visitin' ma uncle last night, an' what d'ye think I did?"

"What?"

"I asked him for a job!"

"A job!" exclaimed Macgregor. "In—in yin o' his shops?"

"Na; in his chief office."

"My! ye've a neck—I mean, ye're no' afraid."

"Ye dinna get muckle in this world wi'oot askin' for it."

"What did he say?" the boy inquired, after a pause.

"He said the job was mine as sune as I was ready to tak' it. Ye see, I tell't him I didna want to start till I had ma shorthand an' typewritin' perfec'. That'll tak' me a few months yet."

"I didna ken ye could typewrite."

"Oh, I've been workin' at it for near a year, but I can only get practisin' afore breakfast an' whiles in the evenin'. Still, I think I'll be ready for the office aboot the spring, if no earlier."

Macgregor regarded her with sorrow mingled with admiration.

"But what way dae ye want to leave here?" he cried, all at once realizing what the change would mean to him.

"There's nae prospects in a wee place like this. Once I'm in a big place, like yer uncle's, I'll get chances. I want to be yer uncle's private secretary——"

"Ye're ower young."

"I didna say in six months." Her voice changed. "Are ye no' pleased, Mac?"

"Hoo can I be pleased when ye're leavin' here? Can ye no' stop? Ye're fine where ye are. An' what'll Miss Tod dae wantin' ye?"

"I'll get uncle to find her another girl—a pretty girl, so that ye'll come here for yer stationery, eh?"

"If ye leave, I'll never come here again. Could ye no' get a job behind the counter in yin of ma uncle's shops?"—clutching at a straw.

"I'll gang furder in the office. If I was a man I daresay I wud try the shop. If I was you, Mac, I wud try it."

"I couldna sell folk things."

"In a big business like yer uncle's there's

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plenty work besides sellin'. But I suppose ye'll stick to the pentin'."

"Aye," he said, shortly.

"Weel, I suppose it's nane o' ma business," she said, good-humouredly. "But, bein' a frien', I thought ye wud hae been pleased to hear ma news."

Ere he could reply a woman came in to purchase note-paper. Possibly Christina's service was a trifle less "finished" than usual, and she made no attempt to sell anything that was not wanted. Macgregor had a few minutes for reflection, and when the customer had gone he said, a shade more hopefully :—

"Ye'll no be kep' as late at the office as here. Ye'll hae yer evenin's free, Christina."

"I'll hae mair time for classes. I'm keen on learnin' French an' German. I ken a bit o' French already ; a frien' o' ma uncle's, a Frenchman, has been giein' me lessons in conversation every Sunday night for a while back. It'll be useful if I become a secretary."

"Strikes me," said Macgregor, gloomily. "ye've never ony time for fun."

"Fun ?"

"For walkin' aboot an'—an' that."

"Oh, ye mean oot there." She swung her hand in the direction of the street. "I walk here in the mornin'—near a mile—an' hame at nicht ; an' I've two hours free in the middle o' the day. Uncle bargained for that when he let me come to Miss Tod. As for loafin' aboot on the street, I had plenty o' the street when I was young, afore ma aunt took me to bide wi' her at Kilmabeg. But I'm no' so badly off for fun, as ye call it, either," she went on. "Noo an' then uncle taks auntie an' me to the theatre. Every holiday we gang to the coast. An' there's always folk comin' to the hoose—"

"Auld folk ?"

"Frae your age upwards. An' next year, when I put up ma hair, I'll be gettin' to dances. Can ye waltz ?"

Macgregor gave his head a dismal shake.

"I—I doobt ye're ower high-class," he muttered, hopelessly. "Ye'll no' be for lookin' at me next year."

"No' if ye wear a face like a fiddle. I like to look at cheery things. What's up wi' ye ?"

"Oh, naething. I suppose ye expec' to be terrible rich some day ?"

"That's the idea."

"What'll ye dae wi' the money ? I suppose ye dinna ken."

"Oh, I ken fine," she returned, with an eager smile. "I'll buy auntie a lovely cottage at the coast, an' uncle a splendid motor-car, an' masel' a big white steam yacht."

"Ye're no' greedy," he remarked, a little sulkily.

"That'll be merely for a start, of course. I'll tak' ye a trip roun' the world for the price o' a coat o' pent to the yacht. Are ye on ? Maybe ye'll be a master-penter by then."

"I—I'll never be onything—an' I'm no' carin'," he groaned.

"If ye lie doon in the road ye'll no' win far, an' ye're likely to get tramped on, forbye. What's wrang wi' ye the day ?" she asked, kindly.

"Ye—ye jist mak' me miserable," he blurted out, and hung his head.

"Me !" she said, innocently. "I'm sure I never meant to dae that. I'm a hard nut, I suppose ; but no jist as hard as I seem. Onything I can dae to mak' ye happy again ?"

"Let me walk hame wi' ye the nicht," said Macgregor.

Some seconds passed ere Christina spoke. "I'm not in the habit of being escorted——" she began.

"For ony sake dinna speak like that."

"I forgot ye wasna a customer. But, seriously, I dinna think it wud be the thing."

"What way, Christina ?"

"Jist because, an' for several other reasons besides. My ! it's gettin' dark. Time I was lightin' up." She struck a match, applied it to a long taper, and proceeded to ignite the jets in the window and above the counter. Then she turned to him again.

"Mac !"

Something in her voice roused him out of his despair. "What, Christina ?"

"If ye walk hame wi' me, I'll expect ye to come up an' see ma aunt an' uncle. Ye see I made a sort o' bargain wi' them that I wudna hae ony frien's they didna ken aboot."

Macgregor's expression of happiness gave place to one of doubt. "Maybe they wudna like me," he said.

"Aweel, that's your risk, of course. But they'll no' bite ye. I leave the shop at eight." She glanced at her little silver watch. "Mercy ! It's time I was puttin' on the kettle. Miss Tod'll be back in a jiffy. Ye best hook it, Mac."

"I'll be waitin' for ye at eight," he said, rising. "An' it's awfu' guid o' ye, Christina."

"Tits, man !" she cried, impatiently. "I'll be late wi' her tea. Adieu for the present."

Macgregor went home happy in a subdued fashion. He found a letter awaiting him. It was from Grandfather Purdie ; it reminded

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him that his seventeenth birthday was on the coming Monday, contained a few kindly words of advice, and enclosed a postal order for ten shillings. Hitherto the old man's gift had been a half-crown, which had seemed a large sum to the boy. But ten shillings !—it would be hard to tell whether Macgregor's feeling of manliness or of gratitude was the greater.

Mrs. Robinson was not a little disturbed when her son failed to hand over the money to her to take care of for him, as had been the custom in the past, and her husband had some difficulty in persuading her to " let the laddie be in the meantime."

" If I had your heart an' you had ma heid," she said, with a faint smile, " I dare say we wud baith be near perfec', John. Aweel, I'm no' gaun to bother the laddie noo. But "—seriously—" he's been oot an awfu' lot at nicht the last week or twa."

" Courtin'," said John, laughing.

" Havers ! " she retorted. " He's no' the sort."

" Neither was I," said John, " an' look at me noo ! "

And there they let the subject drop.

At seven o'clock Macgregor left the house. At the nearest post-office he had his order converted into coin. Somehow its possession rendered the prospect of his meeting with the Baldwins a thought less fearsome. He would tell Christina of his grandfather's gift, and later on, perhaps, he would buy—he knew not what. All at once he wished he had a *great* deal of money—wished he were clever—wished he could talk like Christina, even in the manner he hated—wished vague but beautiful things. The secret aspirations of lad's love must surely make the angels smile—very tenderly.

He reached the trysting-place with a quick heart, a moist brow, and five and twenty minutes to spare.

IX.

At the counter Christina was counting up some unsold periodicals, chattering cheerfully the while to M. Tod, who had retired to the fireside in her living-room. The door opened with a suddenness that suggested a pounce, and a young woman, whom Christina could not recollect having seen before, started visibly at the bang of the bell, recovered herself, and closed the door carefully. It was Christina's habit to sum up roughly the more patent characteristics of new customers almost before they reached the counter. In the present case her estimate was as follows : " Handsome for the money ; conceited, but not proud."

" Good evening," she said, politely.

" Evenin'," replied the other, her dark eyes making a swift survey of the shop. She threw open her jacket, already unbuttoned, disclosing a fresh white shirt, a scarlet bow, and a silver belt. Touching the belt, she said, " I think this was got in your shop."

Christina bent forward a little way.

" Perhaps," she said, pleasantly. " I couldn't say for certain. We've sold several of these belts, but of course we haven't the monopoly."

It may have been that the young woman fancied she was being chaffed. Other customers less unfamiliar with Christina had fancied the same thing. At all events, her tone sharpened.

" But I happen to ken it was got here."

" Then it *was* got here," said Christina, equably. " Do you wish to buy another the same ? I'm sorry we're out of them at present, but we could procure one for you within——"

" No, thanks. An' I didna buy this one, either. It was bought by a young gentleman friend o' mines."

" Oh, indeed ! " Christina murmured, sympathetically. Then her eyes narrowed slightly.

" I came to see if ye could change it," the young woman proceeded. " It's miles too wide. Ye can see that for yersel'."

" They are worn that way at present," said Christina, with something of an effort.

" Maybe. But I prefer it tight-fittin'. Of course, I admit I've an extra sma' waist."

" Yes—smaller than they are worn at present."

" I beg ye pardon ? "

" Granted," said Christina, absently. She was trying to think of more than one male customer to whom she had sold a belt. But there had been only one.

The dark eyes of the young woman glimmered with malignant relish.

" As I was sayin'," she said, " I prefer it tight-fittin'. I've a dance on next week, an' as it is the belt is unsuitable, an' the young man expec's me to wear it. Of course, I couldna tell him that it didna fit me. So I thought I would jist ask ye to change it wi'oot lettin' on to him."

She gave a self-conscious giggle.

" I see," said Christina, dully. " But I'm afraid there's only the one size in those belts, and, besides, we can't change goods that have been worn for a month."

" Oh, so ye mind when ye sold it ? " said

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the other, maliciously. "Ye've a fine memory, miss. But though I've had it for a month —it was part o' his birthday present, ye ken —I've scarcely worn it—only once or twice, to please him."

There was a short silence ere Christina spoke.

"If you are bent on getting the belt made tight-fitting, a jeweller would do it for you, but it would cost as much as the belt is worth," she said, coldly. "It's a very cheap imitation, you know," she added, for the first time in her business career decrying her own wares.

It was certainly a nasty one, but the young woman almost succeeded in appearing to ignore it.

"So ye canna change it —even to please ma young man?" she said, mockingly.

"No," Christina replied, keeping her face to the foe, but with difficulty.

Said the foe:—

"That's a pity, but I dare say I'll get over it." She moved to the door and opened it. She smiled, showing her teeth. (Christina was glad to see they were not perfect.) "A sma' waist like mines is whiles a misfortune," she remarked, with affected self-commiseration.

Christina set her lips, but the retort *would* come.

"Aye," she said, viciously. "Still, I suppose you couldn't grow tall any other way."

But the young woman only laughed—she could afford to laugh, having done that which she had come to do and departed to report the result of her mission to the youth known as Willie Thomson.

"Wha was that, dearie?" M. Tod called from the living-room.

Christina started from an unlovely reverie. "Merely a female," she answered, bitterly, and resumed counting the periodicals in a listless fashion.

The poison bit deep. The cheek of him to suggest walking home with *her* when he was going to a dance with that tight-laced girl next week! No doubt he admired her skimpy waist. He was welcome to it and her—and her poor teeth. And yet he had seemed a nice chap. She had liked him for his shyness, if for nothing else. But the shy kind were always the worst. He had very likely been taking advantage of his shyness. Well, she was glad she had found him out before he could walk home with her. And possibly because she was glad, but probably because she was quite young at heart, tears came to her eyes. . . .



At eight o'clock Macgregor saw the window lights go out and the shop lights grow dim. A minute later he heard an exchange of good nights and the closing and bolting of a door. Then Christina appeared, her head a little higher even than usual.

He went forward eagerly. He held out his hand and—it received his gift of the afternoon unopened.

"I've changed my mind. I'll bid you good night and —good-bye," said Christina, and walked on.

Presently he overtook her.

"Christina, what's up?"

"Kindly do not address me any more."

"Any more?—Never?—What way?——"

She was gone.

He dashed the little package into the gutter and strode off in the opposite direction, his face white, his lip quivering.

If in the past Macgregor seemed to have needed a thorough rousing, he had it now. For an hour he tramped the streets, his heart hot within him, the burden of his thoughts—"She thinks I'm no' guid enough."

And the end of the tramp found him at the door of the home of Jessie Mary. For a wonder, on a Saturday night at that hour, she was in. She opened the door herself.

At the sight of the boy something like fear fell upon her. For what had he come thus boldly?

He did not keep her in suspense. "Will ye gang wi' me to that dance ye was talkin' aboot?" he asked, abruptly, adding, "I've got the money for the tickets."

A curse, a blow even, would have surprised her less.

"Will ye gang, Jessie?" he said, impatiently.

For the life of her she could not answer at once.

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Said he: "If it's Wullie ye're thinkin' o', I'll square him."

"Wullie!" she exclaimed, a cruel contempt in the word.

"Weel, if naebody else is takin' ye, will ye gang wi' me?"

"Dae—dae ye want me, Macgreegor?"

"I'm askin' ye."

She glanced at him furtively, but he was not looking at her; his hands were in his pockets, his mouth was shaped to emit a tuneless whistle. She tried to laugh, but made only a throaty sound. It seemed as if a stranger stood before her, one of whom she knew nothing save his name. And yet she liked the stranger and wanted much to go to the dance with him.

The whistling ceased.

"Are ye gaun wi' somebody else?" he demanded, lifting his face for a moment.

It was not difficult to guess that something acute had happened to him very recently. Jessie Mary suddenly experienced a guilty pang. Yet why Macgregor should have come back to her now was beyond her comprehension. Yon yellow-haired girl in the shop could not have told him anything—that was certain. And though she had not really wanted him back, now that he had come she was fain to hold him once more. Such thoughts made confusion in her mind, out of which two distinct ideas at last emerged: she did not care if she had hurt the yellow-haired girl; she could not go to the dance on Macgregor's money.

So gently, sadly, she told her lie: "Aye, there's somebody else, Macgreegor." Which suggests that no waist is too small to contain an appreciable amount of heart and conscience.

A brief pause, and Macgregor said, drearily: "Aweel, it doesna matter. I'll awa' hame." And went languidly down the stairs.

"It doesna matter." The words haunted Jessie Mary that night, and it was days before she got wholly rid of the uncomfortable feeling that Macgregor had not really wanted her to go to the dance, and that he had, in fact, been "codding" her.

Whereas, poor lad, he had only been "codding" himself, or, at least, trying to do so. By the time he reached the bottom step he had forgotten Jessie Mary.

Once more he tramped the streets.

At home Lizzie was showing her anxiety, and John was concealing his.

When, at long last, he entered the kitchen, he did not appear to hear his mother's "Whaur hae ye been, laddie?" or his father's "Ye're late, ma son." Their looks of concern at his tired face and muddy boots passed unobserved.

Having unlaced his boots and rid his feet of them more quietly than usual, he got up and went to the table at which his mother was sitting.

He took all the money—all—from his pockets and laid it before her.

"There's a shillin' each for Jeannie an' Jimsie. I'm no' needin' the rest. I'm wearied," he said, and went straightway to his own room.

John got up and joined his wife at the table. "Did I no' tell ye," he cried, triumphantly, "that Macgreegor wud dae the richt thing?"

Lizzie stared at the little heap of silver and bronze.

"John," she whispered, at last, and there was a curious distressed note in her voice, "John, d'ye no' see?—he's gied me ower much!"

X.

As a rule tonics are bitter, and their effects very gradual, often so gradual as to be hardly noticeable until one's strength is put to some test. While it would be unfair to deny the existence of "backbone" in Macgregor, it is but just to grant that the "backbone" required stiffening. And it is no discredit to Macgregor that the tincture of Christina's hardier spirit which, along with her (to him) abundant sweetness, he had been absorbing during these past weeks was the very tonic he needed, the tonic without which he could not have acted as he did on the Monday night after his dismissal.

He did not go to the shop, for he had neither money nor the petty courage necessary to ask it of his parents. On the pavement, a little way from the door, he waited in a slow drizzle of rain. He had no doubts as to what he was going to do and say. The idea had been with him all day, from early in the morning, and it *had* to be carried out. Perhaps his nerves were a little too steady to be described as normal.

When eight o'clock struck on a neighbouring tower, he did not start or stir. But across the street, peering round the edge of a close-mouth, another boy jerked his head at the sound. Willie Thomson was exceedingly curious to know whether Saturday night had seen the end of the matter.

Christina, for no reason that she could have given, was late in leaving the shop; it was twenty minutes past the hour when she appeared.

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She approached quickly, but he was ready for her.

"No!" she exclaimed, at the sight of him.

He stepped right in front of her. She was compelled to halt, and she had nothing to say.

He faced her fairly, and said—neither hotly nor coldly, but with a slight throb in his voice:—

"I'll be guid enough yet." With a little nod as if to emphasize his words, and without taking his eyes from her face, he stood aside and let her go.

Erect, he followed her with his eyes until the darkness and traffic of the pavement hid her. Then he seemed to relax, his shoulders drooped slightly, and with eyes grown wistful he moved slowly down the street towards home. Arrived there he shut himself up with an old school dictionary.

Dull work, but a beginning. . . .

"Guid enough yet." Christina had not gone far when through all her resentment the full meaning of the words forced itself upon her. "Oh," she told herself crossly, "I never meant him to take it that way." A little later she told herself the same thing, but merely impatiently. And still later, lying in the dark, she repeated it with a sob.

That night Jessie Mary went to bed wishing angrily that she had taken Macgregor at his word. The prospects of obtaining an escort to the dance were now exceedingly remote, for only that afternoon she had learned that the bandy-legged young man in the warehouse whom she had deemed "safe at a pinch," and who was the owner of a dress suit with a white vest, had invited another girl and was actually going to give her flowers to wear.



"HE TOOK ALL THE MONEY—ALL—FROM HIS POCKETS AND LAID IT BEFORE HER."

Willie went to bed, too, earlier than usual, and lay awake very miserable. For Willie was up to the neck in debt, owing the appalling sum of five shillings and ninepence to an old woman who sold newspapers, paraffin oil, and cheap cigarettes, and who was already threatening to go to his aunt for her money—a proceeding which would certainly result in much misery for Willie. He was "out of a job" again; but it isn't easy to get work, more especially when one prefers to

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do nothing. To some extent Macgregor was to blame for his having got into debt with the tobacconist, for if Macgregor had not stopped smoking, Willie would not have needed to buy nearly so many cigarettes. Nevertheless, Willie's thoughts did not dwell long or bitterly on that point. Rather did they dwell on Macgregor himself. And after a while Willie drew up his legs and pulled the insufficient bedclothes over his head and lay very still. This he had done since he was a small boy, when lonesomeness got the better of him, when he wished he had a father and mother like Macgregor's.

Indeed, it were almost safe to say that of the four young people involved in this little tragi-comedy, Macgregor, yawning over his old school dictionary, was the least unhappy.

* * * * * *

On the fifth night, at the seventh page of words beginning with a "D," Macgregor closed the dictionary and asked himself what was the good of it all. His face was hot, his whole being restless. He looked at his watch —a quarter to eight. He got up and carefully placed the dictionary under a copy of "Ivanhoe" on the chest of drawers. He would go for a walk.

He left the house quietly.

In the kitchen Lizzie, pausing in her knitting, said to John:—

"It's the first nicht Macgreegor's been oot this week."

"Weel, ye should be pleased, wumman." John smiled.

A pause.

"I wonder what made him gie up a' his siller on Seturday nicht."

"Same here. But I wudna ask him," said John, becoming grave. "Wud you?"

She shook her head.

"I tried to on Sunday, but someway I couldna. He's changin'."

"He's growin' up, Lizzie."

"I suppose ye're richt," she said, reluctantly, and resumed her knitting.

From the darkest spot he could find on the opposite pavement Macgregor saw Christina come out of the shop, pass under a lamp, and disappear. He felt sorely depressed during the return journey. The dictionary had failed to increase either his knowledge or his self-esteem. He wondered whether history or geography would do any good; there were books on these subjects in the house. He realized that he knew nothing about anything except his trade, and even there he had to admit that he had learned less than he might have done. And yet he had always wanted to be a painter.

The same night he started reading the History of England, and found it a considerable improvement on the dictionary. He managed to keep awake until the arrival of Julius Cæsar. Unfortunately, he had taken the book to bed, and his mother, on discovering it in the morning, indiscreetly asked him what he had been doing with it.

"Naething special," was his reply, indistinctly uttered, and here ended his historical studies, though for days after Lizzie left the book prominent on the chest of drawers.

On Saturday evening he went once more to watch Christina leave the shop. M. Tod came to the door with her, and they stood talking for a couple of minutes, so that he had more than a glimpse of her. And a spirit rose in him demanding that he should attempt something to prove himself, were it only with his hands. It was not learning, but earning, that would make him "guid enough yet"; not what he could say, but what he could do. There would be time enough for speaking "genteel English," and so on, after—well, after he had got up in the world.

For a moment he felt like running after Christina and making her hearken to his new hope, but self-consciousness prevailed and sent him homewards.

"Halloa!" From a close came a husky voice, apologetic, appealing.

"Halloa, Wullie!" Macgregor stopped. He was not sorry to meet Willie; he craved companionship just then, though he had no confidences to give away.

"Are ye for hame?"

"Aye."

"I—I'll come wi' ye, if ye like, Macgreegor?"

"Come on then."

For a few seconds Willie was silent; then he blurted out—"I'm done for!"

"Done for!" exclaimed Macgregor, startled by the despair in the other's voice. "What's wrang, Wullie?"

"I'm in a mess. But it's nae use tellin' ye. Ye canna dae onything."

"Is't horses?" Macgregor asked, presently.

"Naw, it's no' horses!" Willie indignantly replied.

How virtuous we feel when accused of the one sin we have not committed.

The next moment he clutched Macgregor's arm. "Come in here, an' I'll tell ye." He drew his companion into the close. "I—I couldna tell onybody else"

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From the somewhat incoherent recital which followed Macgregor finally gathered that the old woman to whom Willie owed money had presented her ultimatum. If Willie failed to pay up that night she would assuredly not fail to apply to his aunt first thing in the morning.

"Never heed, Wullie," said Macgregor, taking his friend's arm, and leading him homewards. "Yer aunt'll no' kill ye."

"I wish to goodness she wud!" muttered Willie, with a vehemence that shocked his friend. "She's aye been ill to live wi', but it'll be a sight harder noo."

"Wud the auld wife no' believe ye aboot gettin' a job in a fortnicht? She wudna? Aweel, she'll believe me. Come on, an' I'll speak to her for ye."

But the "auld wife" was adamant. She had been deceived with too many promises ere now. At last Macgregor, feeling himself beaten, disconsolately rejoined Willie and set out for home. Neither spoke until Macgregor's abode was reached. Then Macgregor said:—

"Bide here till I come back," and ran up the stair. He knew his father was out, having gone back to the works to experiment with some new machinery. He found his mother alone in the kitchen.

"Mither," he said, with difficulty, "I wish ye wud gie me five shillins o' ma money."

He could not have startled her more thoroughly.

"Five shillins, laddie! What for?"

"I canna tell ye the noo."

"But——"

"It's no' for—for fun. If ye ask me, I'll tell ye in a secret this day fortnicht. Please, mither."

She got up and laid her hands on his shoulders and turned him to the full light of the gas. He looked at her shyly, yet without flinching. And abruptly she kissed him, and as abruptly passed to the dresser drawer where she kept her purse.

Without a word she put the money in his hand. Without a word he took it, nodded gravely, and went out. In one way Lizzie had done more for her boy in these three minutes than she had done in the last three years.

Macgregor had a sixpence in his pocket, and he added it to the larger coins.

"She can wait for her thruppence," he said, giving the money to the astounded Willie. "Awa' an' pay her. I'll maybe see ye the morn's nicht. So long!" He walked off in the direction opposite to that which Willie ought to take.

But Willie ran after him; he was pretty near to crying.

"Macgreegor," he stammered, "I'll pay ye back when I get ma first wages. An' I'll no' forget—oh, I'll never forget. An' I'll dae ye a guid turn yet."

"Ye best hurry in case she shuts her shop," said Macgregor, and so got rid of him.

While it is disappointing to record that Willie has thus far never managed to repay Macgregor in hard cash, it is comforting to know that his promise to do Macgregor a good turn was more than just an emotional utterance. When, on the following Wednesday and Friday nights, he stealthily tracked Macgregor to the now familiar watching place, his motives were no longer curious or selfish, but benevolent in the extreme. Not that he could bring himself to sympathize with Macgregor in the latter's devotion to a mere girl, for, as a matter of fact, he regarded his friend's behaviour as "awfu' stupid"; but if Macgregor was really "saft" on the girl, it behoved him, Willie, to do what he could to put an end to the existing misunderstanding.

On the Friday night he came regretfully to the conclusion that the "saftness" was incurable, and he accordingly determined to act on the following afternoon. By this time his knowledge of the movements of M. Tod and her assistant was practically as complete as Macgregor's, so that he had no hesitation in choosing the hour for action. He had little fear of Macgregor's coming near the shop in daylight.

So, having witnessed the exit of M. Tod, he crossed the street and examined the contents of the window, as he had seen Macgregor do so often. He was not in the least nervous. The fact that he was without money did not perturb him: it would be the simplest thing in the world to introduce himself and his business by asking for an article which stationers' shops did not supply. A glance at a druggist's window had given him the necessary suggestion. On entering he was seized with a most distressing cough, which racked him while he closed the door and until he reached the counter.

"A cold afternoon," Christina remarked, in a sympathetic tone.

"Aye. Hae ye ony chest protectors?" he hoarsely inquired.

For the fraction of a second only she hesitated.

"Not exactly," she replied. "But I can recommend this."

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From under the counter she brought a quire of brown paper.

"It's cheaper than flannel and much more sanitary," she went on. "There's nothing like it for keeping out the cold. You've only got to cut out the shape that suits you." She separated a sheet from the quire and spread it on the counter. "Enough there for a dozen protectors. Price one penny. I'll cut them out for you, if you like."

"The doctor said I was to get a flannel yin," said Willie, forgetting his hoarseness.

"No," said she; "it's only the reflection." She opened the glass case and took out an infant's rattle. "Threepence."

Willie laughed.

"My! ye're a comic!" he exclaimed.

"Children are easily amused."

There was a short pause. Then Willie, leaning his arms on the edge of the counter, looked up in her face and said:—

"So you're the girl that's mashed on Macgreegor Robinson!"

He grinned.



"WILLIE SPRANG BACK, HIS HAND TO HIS CHEEK."

"Hae ye ony nice ceegarettes the day, miss?"

"No."

"Will ye hae ony on Monday?"

"No."

"When d'ye think ye'll hae some nice ceegarettes?"

Christina's eyes smiled. "Perhaps," she said, solemnly, "by the time you're big enough to smoke them. Anything else to-day?"

"Ye're no' sae green," he said, with grudging admiration,

A breath of silence—a sounding smack.

Willie sprang back, his hand to his cheek. Christina, cheeks flaming, eyes glittering, teeth gleaming, hands clenched, drew herself up.

"Get oot o' this!" she cried. "D'ye hear me! Get oot——"

"Aye, I hear ye," said Willie, resentfully, rubbing his cheek. "Ye're ower smart wi' yer han's. I meant for to say——"

"Be quiet!"

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"——you're the girl Macgreegor's mashed on - an' I——"

Christina stamped her foot.

"Clear oot, I tell ye!"

"——I wudna be Macgreegor for a thoosan' pound! Keep yer hair on, miss. I'll gang when it suits me. Ye've got to hear——"

"I'll no' listen."

She put her hands to her ears.

"Thon girl, Jessie Mary, took a rise oot o' ye last week, an' it was me that put her up to it. Macgreegor gied her the belt, richt enough, but that was afore he got saft on you——"

"Silence! I cannot hear a word you say," declared Christina, recovering herself and her more formal speech, though her colour, which had faded, now bloomed again.

"I'll cry it loud, if ye like, so as the folk in the street can hear. But ye can pretend ye dinna hear," he said, ironically. "I'm no' heedin' whether ye hear or no'."

"I wish you would go away, you impertinent thing!"

"Macgreegor——" he began.

Once more she covered her ears.

"Macgreegor," proceeded Willie, with a rude wink, "never had ony notion o' takin' Jessie Mary to the dance. She was jist coddin' ye, though I dare say she was kin' o' jealous because ye had cut her oot. So I think ye should mak' it up wi' Macgreegor when ye get the chance. He's awfu' saft on ye. I wudna be him for a——"

"Go away!" said Christina. "You're simply wasting your breath."

"Dinna let on to Macgreegor that I tell't ye," he continued, unmoved. "An' if Jessie Mary tries it on again, jist you put yer finger to yer nose at her."

"If you don't go at once, I'll——"

"Oh, ye canna dae onything, miss. I'll forgie ye for that scud ye gied me, but I wud advise ye no' to be so quick wi' yer han s in future, or ye'll maybe get into trouble." He turned towards the door. "I dare say ye ken fine that Macgreegor watches ye leavin' the shop every nicht——"

"What *are* you talking about?"

"Gie him a whistle or a wave the next time. There's nae use in bein' huffy."

"That's enough!"

Willie opened the door.

"An' ye best hurry up, or ye'll maybe loss him. So long. I'll no tell him I seen ye blushin'."

Christina opened her mouth, but ere she could speak, with a grin and a wink he was gone. She collapsed upon the stool. She had never been so angry in her life—at least, so she told herself.

XI.

JOHN ROBINSON and his son sat on a pile of timber at the docks. Dusk was falling, and the air that had been mild for the season was growing chill.

John replaced his watch in his pocket. "It's comin' on for tea-time. Are ye ready for the road, Macgreegor?"

"Aye," said the boy, without stirring.

For two hours he had been struggling to utter the words on which he believed his future depended.

"Weel," said John, getting out his pipe preparatory to lighting it on passing the gate, "we best be movin'."

It was now or never. Macgregor cleared his throat. "The pentin' trade's rotten," he said, in a voice not his own.

"Eh?" said John, rather staggered by the statement which was without relevance to any of the preceding conversation. "What's rotten aboot it?"

"There's—there's nae prospecs in it for a man."

"Nae prospecs! Hoots, Macgreegor! there's as guid prospecs in the pentin' as in ony ither trade. Dinna fash yer heid aboot that—no' but what I'm pleased to ken ye're thinkin' aboot yer prospecs, ma son. But we'll speak aboot it on the road hame."

"I wish," said Macgregor, with the greatest effort of all, "I wish I had never gaed into it. I wish I had gaed into Uncle Purdie's business."

John sat down again. At last he said, "D'ye mean that, Macgreegor?"

"Aye, I mean it."

For the first time John Robinson felt disappointed—in a vague fashion, it is true, yet none the less unpleasantly disappointed—in his son.

"But ye've been at the pentin' for three year," he said, a little impatiently.

"I ken that, fayther."

"An' ye mind ye had the chance o' gaun into yer uncle's business when ye left the schule?"

"Aye."

"Maybe ye mind that yer Aunt Purdie was unco offended, for it was her notion—at least, it was her that spoke aboot it—an' she declared ye wud never get a second chance. D'ye no' mind, Macgreegor?"

"I mind aboot her bein' offended, but I dinna mind aboot—the ither thing," Macgregor answered, dully.

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"But *I* mind it, for she was rale nesty to yer mither at the time. In fac', I dinna ken hoo yer mither stood her impiddence. An', in a way, it was a' ma fau't, for it was me that said ye was to choose the trade that ye liked best—an' I thocht I was daein' the richt thing, because I had seen lads spiled wi' bein' forced into trades they didna fancy. Aye, I thocht I was daein' the richt thing—— An' noo ye're tellin' me I did the wrang thing."

He rose slowly and Macgregor joined him. At the gate John apparently forgot to light his pipe. They were half-way home ere he spoke.

He put his hand round his son's arm. "Ye're no' to think, Macgreegor, that I wud stan' in yer road when ye want to better yersel'. No' likely! I never was set on bein' a wealthy man masel', but naething wud mak' me prooder nor to see you gang up in the world; an' I can say the same for yer mither. An' I can see that ye micht gang far in yer uncle's business, for yer uncle was aye fond o' ye, an' I think ye could manage to please him at yer work, if ye was tryin'. *But*—ye wud need yer aunt's favour to begin wi', an' that's the bitter truth, an' she's no' the sort o' body that forgets what she conseeders an affront. Weel, it'll need some thinkin' ower. I'll hae to see what yer mither says. An' ye best no' expec' onything. Stick to the pentin' in the meantime, an' be vera certain afore ye quit the trade ye're in. That's a' I can say, ma son."

Macgregor had no words then. Never before had his father seriously spoken at such length to him. His heart was heavy, troubled about many things.

Eight o'clock on Monday night saw him at the accustomed spot; on Wednesday night also he was there. If only Christina had been friends with him he would have asked her what he ought to do. Yet the mere glimpse of her confirmed him in his desire to change his trade. On the Wednesday night it seemed to him that she walked away from the shop much more slowly than usual, and the horrid thought that she might be giving some other "man" a chance to overtake her assailed him. But at last she was gone without that happening.

On the way home he encountered Jessie Mary. She greeted him affably, and he could not but stop.

"Lovely dance on Friday. Ye should hae been there. Ma belt was greatly admired," she remarked.

"Was it?"

"I think I've seen the shop where ye bought it," she said, watching his face covertly.

"It's likely," he replied, without emotion.

Jessie Mary was relieved; evidently he was without knowledge of her visit to the shop. Now that the world was going well with her again she bore no ill will, and was fain to avoid any. For at the eleventh hour—or, to be precise, the night before the dance—she had miraculously won back the allegiance of the young man with the exquisite moustache, who served in the provision shop, and for the present she was more than satisfied with herself.

So she bade Macgregor good night, a little patronizingly perhaps, and hurried off to reward her recovered swain with the pleasant sight of herself and an order for a finnan haddie.

Macgregor was still in the dark as to whether his father had mentioned to his mother the subject of that conversation at the docks. John had not referred to it again, and the boy was beginning to wonder if his case was hopeless.

On the Friday night, however, just when he was about to slip from the house, his mother followed him to the door. Very quietly she said:—

"When ye come in, Macgreegor, I want ye to tell me if ye're still set on leavin' the pentin'. Dinna tell me noo. Tak' yer walk, an' think it ower, serious-like. But dinna be late, laddie."

She went back to the kitchen, leaving him to shut the door.

It was not much after seven o'clock, but he went straightway in the direction of M. Tod's shop. For the first time in what seemed an age, he found himself at the familiar, glittering window. And lo! the glazed panel at the back was open a few inches.

Quickly he retreated to the edge of the pavement, and stood there altogether undecided. But desire drew him, and gradually he approached the window again.

Christina was sitting under the lamp, at the desk, her pretty profile bent over her writing, her fair plait falling over the shoulder of her scarlet shirt. She was engaged in pencilling queer little marks on paper, and doing so very rapidly. Macgregor understood that she was practising shorthand. No doubt she would be his uncle's private secretary some day, while he——

All at once it came to him that no one in the world could answer the great question

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but Christina. If the thing didn't matter to Christina, it didn't matter to him; it was for her sake that he would strive to be "guid enough yet," not for the sake of being "guid enough" in itself. Besides, she had put the idea into his head. Surely she would not refuse to speak to him on that one subject.

Now, all this was hardly in accordance with the brave and independent plan which Macgregor had set out to follow—to wit, that he would not attempt to speak to Christina until he could announce that he was a member of his uncle's staff. Yes, Love is the great maker of plans—also the great breaker.

Coward or not, it took courage to enter the shop.

Christina looked up, her colour deepening slightly. "Halloa!" she said, coolly, though not coldly.

It was not a snub, anyway, and Macgregor walked up to the counter. He came to the point at once.

"Wud ye advise me to try an' get a job frae ma uncle?" he said, distinctly enough.

"Me?" The syllable was fraught with intense astonishment.

"Ye advised me afore to try it," he said, fairly steadily.

"Did I?" carelessly.

It was too much for him.

"Oh, Christina!" he whispered, reproachfully.

"Well, I'm sure it's none of my business. I thought you preferred being a painter."

The pity was that Christina should have just then remembered the existence of such a person as Jessie Mary, also the fact of her own slow walk from the shop the previous night. Yet she had forgotten both when she opened the panel at the back of the window a few inches. And perhaps she was annoyed with herself, knowing that she was not behaving quite fairly.

He let her remark concerning his preference for the painting trade pass, and put a very direct question.

"What made ye change yer mind aboot me that nicht?"

"What night?" she asked, flippantly, and told herself it was the silliest thing she had ever uttered.

She had gone too far; she saw it in his face.

"I didna think ye was as bad as that," he said, in a curiously hard voice, and turned from the counter.

Quick anger, quick compunction, quick fear, and then: "Mac!"

He wheeled at the door. She was holding out her hand. Her smile was frail.

"Are ye in earnest?" he said, in a low voice, but he did not wait for her answer.

She drew away her hand, gently.

"Dinna ask me ony questions," she pleaded. "I—I didna really mean what I said that night, or this night either. I think I was off my onion"—a faint laugh—"but I'm sorry I behaved the way I did. Is that enough?"

It was more than enough; how much more he could not say.

"I've missed ye terrible," he murmured.

Christina became her practical self.

"So ye're for tryin' yer uncle's business?" she began.

"If he'll gie me the chance."

"Weel, I'm sure I wish ye the best o' luck."

"Then ye think I ought to try?"

This with great eagerness.

"If ye've made up yer mind it's for the best," she answered, cautiously.

He had to be satisfied with that.

"Will I let ye ken if it comes off?"

She nodded. Then she glanced at her watch.

"Can—can I get walkin' hame wi' ye, Christina?"

It was out before he knew.

She shook her head.

"Uncle said he wud come for me. He had some business up this way. If ye wait a minute ye'll see him. I'll introduce ye. He'll be interested, seein' ye're a nephew o' Mr. Purdie."

"Oh, I couldna. I best hook it. But, Christina, I can come to-morrow, eh?"

She laughed.

"I canna prevent ye. But I'll no' be here in the afternoon. Uncle's takin' auntie an' me to a *matinée*, an' I'll no' be back much afore six."

"Weel, I'll meet ye at eight an' walk hame wi' ye."

"Will ye?"

"Oh, Christina, say 'aye.'"

"I'll consider it."

And he had to be satisfied with that, too, for here the noisy door opened to admit a tall, clean-shaven, pleasant-featured man of middle age.

"Halloa, uncle!" cried Christina.

Macgregor fled, but not without gaining a quick smile that made all the difference in the world to him.

Ten minutes later he hurried into the home kitchen.

"Mither, I've decided to leave the pentin'." The moment he said it his heart misgave him,

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and the colour flew to his face. But he need not have doubted his parents.

"Weel, ma son," said John, soberly, "we'll dae the best we can wi' yer Aunt Purdie."

"Jist that," said Lizzie.

And that was all.

An urgent piece of work had to be done the following afternoon, and he was later than usual, for a Saturday, in getting home. He found his mother preparing to go out, and his father looking strangely perplexed.



"MRS. PURDIE ROSE IN A MANNER INTENDED TO BE LANGUID."

"She's gaun to see yer Aunt Purdie," said John, in a whisper.

Macgregor looked from one to the other, hesitated, and went over to Lizzie. He put his hand on her arm.

"Mither, ye're no' to gang. I—I'll gang masel'."

Then, indeed, Lizzie Robinson perceived that her boy was in danger of becoming a man.

XII.

To press the little black button at the door of his aunt's handsome West-end flat was the biggest thing Macgregor had ever done. As a small boy he had feared his Aunt Purdie, as a schoolboy he had hated her, as a youth he had despised her; his feelings towards her now were not to be described, but it is certain that they included a well-nigh overpowering sense of dread; indeed, the faint thrill of the electric bell sent him back a pace towards the stair. His state of perspiration gave place to one of miserable chillness.

A supercilious servant eyed his obviously "good" clothes and bade him wait. Nevertheless, a sting was what Macgregor needed just then; it roused the fighting spirit. When the servant returned, and in an aloof fashion—as though, after all, it were none of her business—suggested that he might enter, he was able to follow her across the hall, with its thick rugs and pleasantly warm atmosphere, to the drawing-room, without faltering. Less than might have been expected the grandeur of his surroundings impressed—or depressed—him, for in the course of his trade he had grown familiar with the houses of the

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rich. But he had enough to face in the picture without looking at the frame.

Mrs. Purdie was seated at the side of the glowing hearth, apparently absorbed in the perusal of a charitable society's printed list of donations.

"Your nephew, ma'am," the servant respectfully announced, and retired.

Mrs. Purdie rose in a manner intended to be languid. Macgregor had not seen the well-remembered figure for two years. With his hat in his left hand he went forward holding out his right. A stiff, brief handshake followed.

"Well, Macgregor, this is quite an unexpected pleasure," she said, unsmiling, resuming her seat. "Take a chair. It is a considerable period since I observed you last." Time could not wither the flowers of language for Mrs. Purdie. "You are getting quite a big boy. How old are you now? Are your parents in good health?" She did not wait for answers to these inquiries. "I am sorry your uncle is not at home. His commercial pursuits confine him to his new and commodious premises even on Saturday afternoons." (At that moment Mr. Purdie was smoking a pipe in the homely parlour of Christina's uncle, awaiting his old friend's return from the theatre.) "His finance is exceedingly high at present." With a faint smack of her lips she paused, and cast an inquiring glance at her visitor.

Macgregor saw the ice, so to speak, before him. The time had come. But he did not go tapping round the edge. Gathering himself together, he leaped blindly.

In a few ill-chosen words he blurted out his petition.

Then there fell an awful silence. And then—he could hardly believe his own ears!

There are people in the world who seem hopelessly unlovable until you—perforce, perhaps—ask of them a purely personal favour. There may even be people who leave the world with their fountains of good-will still sealed simply because no one had the courage or the need to break the seals for them. Until to-day the so-called favours of Aunt Purdie had been mere patronage and cash payments.

Even now she could not help speaking patronizingly to Macgregor, but through the patronage struggled a kindliness and sympathy of which her relations, so long used to her purse-pride, her affectations, her absurdities, could never have imagined her capable. She made no reference to the past; she suggested no difficulties for the present; she cast no doubts upon the future. Her nephew, she declared, had done wisely in coming to her; she would see to it that he got his chance. It seemed to Macgregor that she promised him ten times all he would have dreamed of asking. Finally, she bade him stay to dinner and see his uncle; then, perceiving his anxiety to get home and possibly, also, his dread of offending her by expressing it, she invited him for the following Sunday evening, and sent him off with a full heart and a light head.

He burst into the kitchen, bubbling over with his wonderful news. During its recital John gave vent to noisy explosions of satisfaction, Jeannie beamed happily, Jimsie stared at his transformed big brother, and Lizzie, though listening with all her ears, began quietly to prepare her son's tea.

"An' so she treated ye weel, Macgreegor," said John, rubbing his hands, while the speaker paused for words.

"She did that! An' I'm to get dooble the wages I'm gettin' the noo, an' I've to spend the half o' them on night classes, for, ye see. I'm to learn *everything* aboot the business, an' then——"

Said Lizzie, gently: "Wud ye like yer egg biled or fried, dearie?"

It was nearly eight o'clock when he reached the shop, and he decided to wait at a short distance from the window until Christina came out. He was not going to risk interruption by the old woman or a late customer. He would tell his wonderful tale in the

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privacy of the busy pavement, under the secrecy of the noisy street. Yet he was desperately impatient, and with every minute after the striking of the hour a fresh doubt assailed him.

At last the lights in the window went out, and the world grew brighter. Presently he was moving to meet her, noting dimly that she was wearing a bigger hat than heretofore.

She affected surprise at the sight of him, but not at his eagerly whispered announcement :—

"I've got it!"

"Good for you," she said, kindly, and refrained from asking him, teasingly, where he thought he was going. "It was lovely at the theatre," she remarked, stepping forward.

"Dae ye no' want to hear aboot it?" he asked, disappointed, catching up with her.

"Of course," she said, cheerfully. "Was yer uncle nice?"

"It was ma aunt," he explained, somewhat reluctantly, for he feared she might laugh. But she only nodded understandingly, and, relieved, he plunged into details.

"Ye've done fine," she said, when he had finished. "I'm afraid it'll be you that'll be wantin' a private secretary when I get that length."

"Dinna laugh at me," he murmured, reproachfully.

"Dinna be ower serious, Mac," she returned. "Ye'll get on a' the better for bein' able to tak' a joke whiles. I'm as pleased as Punch aboot it."

He was more pleased, if possible.

"If it hadna been for you, Christina, I wud never hae had the neck to try it," he said, warmly.

"I believe ye!" she said, quaintly.

"But it's the truth, an' I'll never forget it."

"A guid memory's a gran' thing. An' when dae ye start wi' yer uncle?"

"Monday week."

"That's quick work. Ye've beat me a' to sticks. Dinna get swelled heid."

"Christina, I wish ye wudna——"

"I canna help it. It's the theatre, I suppose. Oh, I near forgot to tell ye, yer uncle was in when we got hame frae the theatre. I hadna time to speak to him, for I had to run back to the shop. Hadna even time to change ma dress. I think yer uncle whiles gets tired o' bein' a rich man an' livin' in a gran' hoose. Maybe *you'll* feel that way some day."

He let her run on, now and then glancing wistfully at her pretty, animated face. The happiness, the triumph, he had anticipated were not his. But all the more they were worth working for. So they came to the place where she lived.

"Come up," she said, easily. "I tell't auntie I wud maybe bring ye up for supper."

Doubtless it was the shock of gratification as much as anything that caused him to hang back. She had actually mentioned him to her aunt!

"Will ma uncle be there?" he stammered, at last.

"Na, na. Ye'll see plenty o' *him* later on!"

"Maybe yer aunt winna be pleased——"

"Come on, Mac! Ye're ower shy for this world," she laughed, encouragingly.

They went up together.

Christina had a latch-key, and on opening the door said :—

"Oh, they haven't come home yet. Out for a walk, I suppose. But they'll be home in a minute. Come in. There's a peg for your hat."

She led the way into a fire-lit room and turned up the gas. Macgregor saw a homely, cosy parlour, something like his grandfather's



PARLOUR AT THE BALDWINS'.

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at Rothesay, but brighter generally. A round table was trimly laid for supper. In the window a small table supported a typewriter and a pile of printed and manuscript books, the sight of which gave him a sort of sinking feeling.

"Sit down," she said, indicating an easy chair. "Auntie and uncle won't be long."

He took an ordinary chair, and tried hard to look at his ease.

As she took off her hat at the mirror over the mantelpiece she remarked:—

"You'll like Uncle Baldwin at once, and you'll like auntie before long. She's still a wee bit prim."

He noticed that her speech had changed with entering the house, but somehow the "genteel English" did not seem so unnatural now. He supposed he would have to learn to speak it, too, presently.

"But she is the best woman in the world," Christina continued, patting her hair, "and she'll be delighted about you going into your uncle's business. I think it was splendid of you managing your aunt so well."

Macgregor smiled faintly.

"I doobt it was her that managed me," he said. "But, Christina, I'll no' let her be sorry — nor — nor you either."

"Oh, I'm sure you'll get on quickly," she said, gravely, bending to unbutton her long coat.

"I intend to dae that," he cried, uplifted by her words. "Gie me a year or twa, an' I'll show ye!"

She slipped out of the coat, and stood for a moment, faintly smiling, in her best frock, a simple thing of pale grey lustre relieved with white, her best black shoes, her best thread stockings, her heavy yellow plait over her left shoulder.

The boy caught his breath.

"Just a minute," she said, and left the room to put away her coat and hat.

Macgregor half turned in his chair, threw his arms upon the back, and pressed his brow to his wrist.

So she found him on her return.

"Sore head, Mac?" she asked, gently, recovering from her surprise, and going close to him.

"Let me gang," he whispered. "I—I'll never be guid enough."

The slight sound of a key in the outer door reached the girl's ears. She gave her eyes an impatient little rub.

She laid a hand on his shoulder. "Cheer up!" she said, almost roughly, and stooping quickly, she touched her lips to his hair, so lightly, so tenderly, that he was not aware.



"SHE TOUCHED HER LIPS TO HIS HAIR, SO LIGHTLY, SO TENDERLY, THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE."

THE END.

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AN AMUSING SCENE WITH THE PENDER TROUPE AT DRURY LANE.

MY REMINISCENCES.

By GEORGE GRAVES.

(*Photographs by Foulsham & Banfield.*)



AT THE AGE OF FOUR.

IN justice to myself, and in gratitude to my parents, I feel bound to say that my mother, a most truthful woman, who would rather have paid the housekeeping expenses herself than have told a lie, has put it on record that, as a baby, I was one of the most extraordinarily versatile prodigies who have ever graced this beautiful world. I am reported to have said "absolutely nothing"—there's a hidden joke in this sentence—before I was six months old, while the number of epigrams rumour has it that I put on record would, had they been taken down, surely have put that most epigrammatic of all plays, "Lady Windermere's Fan," completely in the shade.

But there, I am a modest man, so I will draw a veil over those early days of long ago, of which I remember absolutely nothing. Curiously enough, one of the first things I can remember in my distinguished life is that, at a very early age, I made up my mind to be an actor, or nothing. My best friends in "the profession" even now frequently ask me what, as I am not an actor, I propose to do to while away the time. But that's merely kindly criticism, of course. Anyway, I did resolve amazingly early in life to become an actor, although I am unable to account, by heredity or otherwise, for this enthusiastic

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leaning towards the stage. The fact remains, however, that without any theatrical influence to stimulate my juvenile bent for the theatre I decided upon my career with such precocious determination that while still a lad I ran away from school and sought employment at a music-hall.

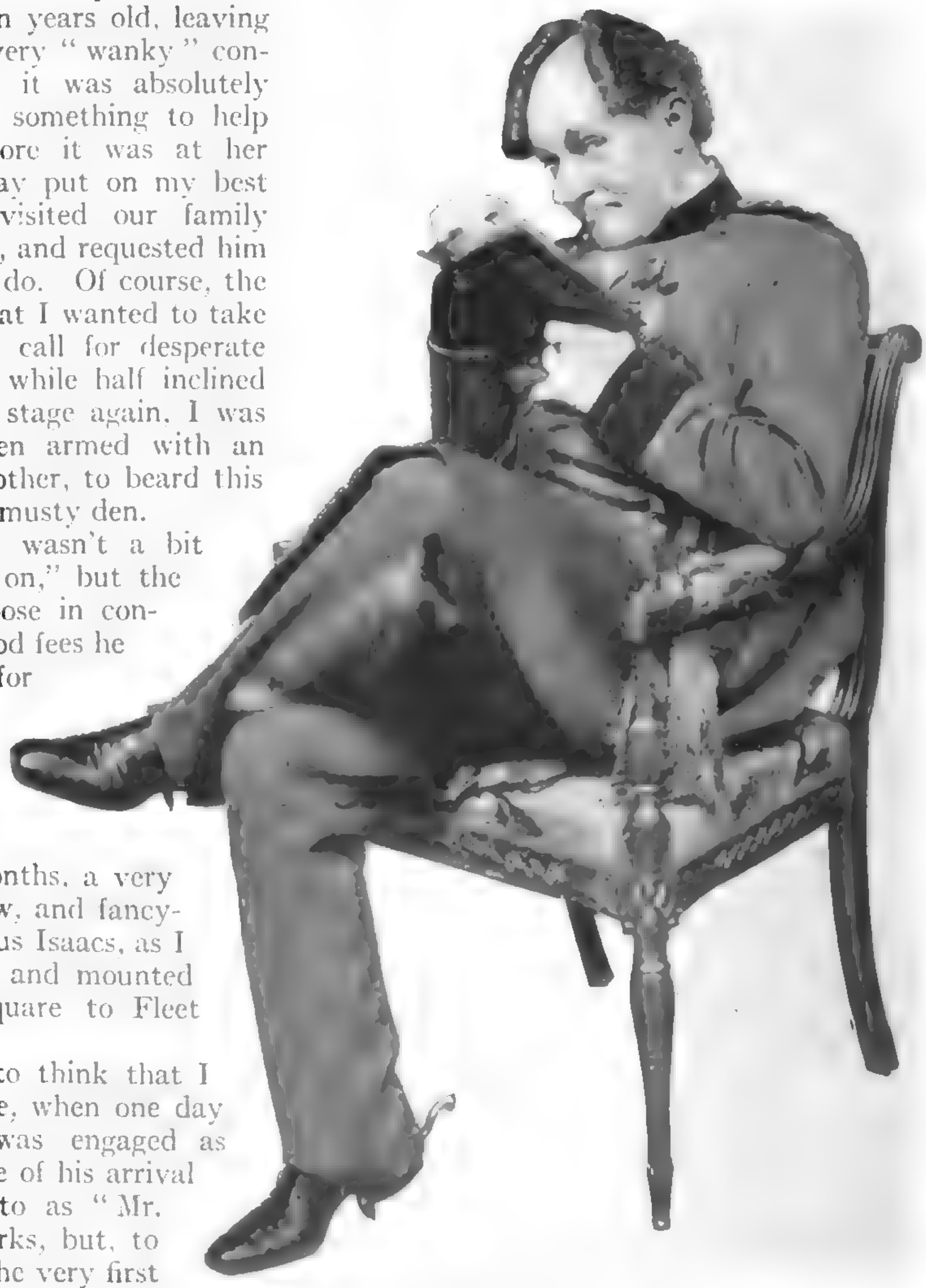
But, alas! this early adventure ended in a distinctly discouraging fashion, for after having been missing for a fortnight I was traced, taken home again, soundly spanked with the paternal very-heavily-soled slipper, and sent back to school, where I had to remain for another two years, at the end of which time occupation was provided for me, not in the alluring glare of the footlights, but amid the much more prosaic surroundings of a solicitor's office.

I would here mention that my father died when I was about eleven years old, leaving the family estates in a very "wanky" condition. In consequence, it was absolutely necessary for me to do something to help my mother, and therefore it was at her suggestion that I one day put on my best clothes and stealthily visited our family lawyer in Chancery Lane, and requested him to give me something to do. Of course, the law was the last thing that I wanted to take up, but desperate needs call for desperate remedies, and therefore, while half inclined to make a bolt for the stage again, I was sufficiently obedient, when armed with an introduction from my mother, to beard this eminent legal light in his musty den.

To be quite frank, I wasn't a bit hopeful of being "taken on," but the worthy solicitor—I suppose in consideration of the many good fees he had stuck my poor dad for—to my "joy," immediately installed me as junior at fifteen shillings per. Joy and happiness! I remained with this solicitor for about six months, a very important limb of the law, and fancying myself a juvenile Rufus Isaacs, as I took my morning paper and mounted the bus from Sloane Square to Fleet Street every morning.

I was just beginning to think that I could run the office alone, when one day a very ugly old clerk was engaged as manager. Up to the time of his arrival I was always referred to as "Mr. Graves" by the other clerks, but, to my horror and disgust, the very first time the new manager spoke to me he called me "boy!" I was furious—a walking cyclone of wrath! One winter's evening he goaded me more than ever by calling me that horrid name three times before tea was served by the housekeeper.

For me, the juvenile Rufus Isaacs disguised as a callow youth, to be called "boy" three times in almost as many minutes was an indignity that I could not put up with. I planned a nice, clean, sporting revenge. My tormentor, I must tell you, used to drink out of a moustache-cup—and *I knew this*. I, like the late Dr. Palmer, noted these details, and when the housekeeper poured out a cup of tea for "him" I waited my opportunity, when he rose from his desk, to half empty the cup of strong and vigorous "oopang"



IN "PRINCESS CAPRICE."

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"I PACKED UP MY SMALL BELONGINGS AND STOLE OUT."

lying handy to his right hand, and filled it up with writing-ink.

Then I waited like a panther watching his prey. I can see the old chap now, resuming his work, scribbling away, then pause, yawn, lean back, and push his spectacles up on his brow, and gaze lovingly at my "poisoned chalice," raise it to his lips, take a large gulp —nearly all of it, as the chill was off—and then I packed up my small belongings and stole out, leaving my hated *confrère* gurgling and spitting and coughing, never, never to return to the law. But even to-day I remember that the last word I heard my enemy say, as he sat there half poisoned, was "Boy!"

Fifteen years have passed since that adventurous plunge was taken. For the first six of these my time was not lacking in its full share of a provincial player's life. I am bound to confess, however, that I thoroughly enjoyed those days, and, indeed, I am not at all sure that there is any period of an actor's life so entirely happy and delightful as those early days of struggle, "with no responsibility, plenty of experience, two pounds a week when you get it, and an economical diet of haddock and weak tea when you don't."

I could relate experiences galore of my early struggles. I feel sure, however, that these would be of no real interest to readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE, for tales of actors' early struggles are almost as numerous as pebbles on the seashore. Suffice it to say, therefore, for six years or so I did a deal of touring for the greater part of the year, generally filling in the time at Christmas by playing in provincial pantomimes, which I am glad to say gave me opportunities of really persuading managers that, on occasions, I could be a little more humorous than a Scotchman at a wedding breakfast.

At the time the Boer War was in progress I secured an engagement with a theatrical company about to tour in Cape Town and other cities. I mention this particular engagement because it was connected with an experience of which I still have sore memories. We were quite a happy party of passengers on the way out, and after about a fortnight's voyage someone suggested a fancy-dress ball. Excitement! Everyone discussing what sort of costumes he could evolve out of anything he was possessed of. At length the eventful night came. Bubbles of excitement! I was about the last to "get a move on." Everyone was streaming into the saloon for dinner in various gorgeous costumes—home-made. I remember one lady made a big success as Cleopatra out of a large bath towel. She quite anticipated the Directoire.

Then my plot started. The quartermaster brought me a complete set of clothes taken from a stoker who had just left off his four hours' work. Shall I ever forget those clothes? Grimy and horrible with coal-dust, yet they had to go on. The cap was greasy, but it had to go on. I next got some soot and rubbed it in my hair and on my face and hands. Ye gods! What a sight I looked—and felt. Stokers, by the way, all carry a "sweat rag" round the neck, one end of which is held in the side of the mouth. It had to be done. When ready, I tried the make-up "on the dogs"; that is to say, I went to the second engineer's cabin, and popping my head through the curtains asked permission to "just go and gaze on the ladies and gentlemen in the saloon, plaze, sorr."

I had to be "nippy," for the second engineer, on seeing me, turned round and hurled a large plate at me. Good! The make-up was evidently quite Willieclarksonian in its faithfulness to detail. The game was on, and I flew up to the saloon. I pushed

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the steward over as I ran in and addressed the long centre table, at the head of which sat the captain. At my end was the very athletic back of the doctor, over whose shoulder I addressed the skipper thus: "If you plaze, sorr, I ha-v-e a grievance. Me partner at number four furnace is in drink, and he's afther hitting me wid a large lump of coal all the toime."

Then the tragedy began. The doctor looked up at me, rolling up his cuffs; the captain—dear old Moseley—went very pale, and called on the stewards to eject me. Whereupon I was seized by the back of the neck and kicked most unmercifully along the deck, and punched all over. I was sore and



"I WAS SEIZED BY THE BACK OF THE NECK AND KICKED MOST UNMERCIFULLY ALONG THE DECK."

sorry for my experiment, and actually had to hide myself for a few minutes and then slip around to the open saloon windows and beg to be allowed to take "Mr. Graves's seat at table." Then it, of course, was out, and all over. But a word of advice—when on board ship, and if perchance you should want to be "funny" at a fancy-dress ball, don't impersonate a stoker; there's nothing in it.

But to proceed with the details of my epoch-making career. If "I who shouldn't" may say so, my first London success was achieved in "The School Girl" some ten years ago. Since that date I have appeared in a number of musical comedy successes, including "Veronique," "The Little Michus"—in which I invented that weird and fabulous creature, the "Gazëka"—"The Belle of Brittany," "The Merry Widow," "Princess Caprice," and lots of other things, such as pantomimes, music-hall sketches, and so on and so forth.

I thus slur over the catalogical details of the plays in which I have appeared, for the simple reason that I am as certain as one can be certain of anything in this world that no one with any sense can be in the least interested in hearing about things in the order in which they happen. I may say that I have learnt this valuable lesson in life by stern experience. I have an ancient relation, who has passed man's allotted span of threescore years and ten, who is never quite so happy as when relating to his friends the details of various incidents of his life as they have happened year by year since he left school at the age of eighteen. No wonder the old gentleman dines alone.

So many stories have been spread—I gather this from the number of people who habitually try to borrow money from me—as to the colossal nature of the salary paid to me at Drury Lane at pantomime time, that it may be of interest if I say that my first appearance at "the Lane" was as Abanazar in 1909. In the following year I played the part of Jack's mother in "Jack and the Beanstalk," and, if I may say so, I think I gave a somewhat new reading of a woman's part as played by a man in pantomime.

It had always seemed to me that the pantomime woman as played by a man was more often than not a freak made to resemble something that never lived. Now this, in

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my opinion, is a mistake. The pantomime "man-woman" should at all times be human, and not some creature out of a zoo. Why, because one is playing a woman in pantomime, one should depart from the "legitimate" I cannot imagine. Indeed, I think generally, with regard to pantomimes, that the sooner legitimate dramatic methods are recognized, the better will be the chances of this form of entertainment surviving.

If I were a manager, I would certainly employ none but legitimate dramatic artistes in pantomime. As Shakespeare said, "The play's the thing," and that is the great point always to be considered. Once you get familiar with your audiences, and allow your audience to get familiar with you, all the illusion vanishes, and the stage, it must not be forgotten, is an illusion pure and simple.

In the whole course of a busy life, and in an experience which has embraced the playing of a number of different characters in different plays in the same week, I never remember having to work quite so hard as at Drury Lane in the children's holiday season, when there are six *matinées* a week, in addition to the usual evening performance. Ye gods! the vocal strain alone would try the voice of the most leather-lunged penciller that ever laid a point under the odds in Tattersall's ring, while the amount of exercise that one takes between one-twenty in the afternoon and eleven-thirty at night would test the stamina of a Marathon runner.



AS A PANTOMIME "DAME."



IN "THE BELLE OF BRITTANY."



IN "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY."

And yet the majority of people not actually connected with the theatre will persist in hugging the notion that the existence of a leading comedian is nothing more or less than one merry and continual round of mirth and laughter. Mirth and laughter, forsooth! Never was there a more erroneous idea than this. Why, I sometimes wonder how it is that comedians can ever raise a smile at all on their own faces, to say nothing of the effect they hope to exercise on the features of others, so serious and strenuous is their life.

But, seriously, the trials and troubles of a comedian are very, very real. Only a short time ago, when playing at the Shaftesbury at night and rehearsing at Drury Lane all day, I received an invitation to sup at a fashionable restaurant after my evening's show was over. To my sorrow, I accepted. Why to my sorrow? Well, because the moment I had located myself on a chair at my hostess's side, she turned round to me



IN "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY."

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and said, "Now, do make us laugh, Mr. Graves. My daughters and I"—I must tell you that she had three very plain daughters with her, who gazed at me expectantly—"have been suffering from terrible depression all day. We look to you to remove this gloom. Now, then"—and the kindly soul tapped me playfully on the wrist with a fan—"be funny at once." I put it to you, could anyone be funny in such circumstances?



"NOW, THEN, BE FUNNY AT ONCE."

In pantomime especially is the lot of a comedian a hard one. He is supposed to be funny, and to deal in humour particularly suited to the childish mind, and yet almost equally well suited to the sense of the ridiculous of the adult. Now that is not an easy rask, is it? I ask readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE would they expect to made their best friend's little boy laugh with the same brand of joke that they hand out to an adult? I think not, and probably, if they tried, their best friend's little boy's mother would ask them to be more careful in future as to how they spoke to children. Oh, yes, there's no doubt about it at all. A comedian is a man to be pitied, and to be sympathized with, for he's expected to be equal to every emergency, and to deal in five-pronged jokes—that is to say, jokes which will appeal alike to the young, the old, the middle-aged, the serious, and the frivolous.



A PANTOMIME INCIDENT FROM DRURY LANE.

By reason of the indoor nature of his work, it has always seemed to me absolutely essential from a health point of view that an actor should have a hobby of the open-air species. In my own case, I have always been particularly fond of racing. Indeed, once I and a few friends who were always glad to pick up a fortune on the Turf had what gentlemen intimate with the art of racing describe as a "dark horse"—*i.e.*, its exceedingly high speed had been demonstrated under such conditions that the general public were in absolute ignorance of the favourable chance of victory it would enjoy when the contest was due for decision. In other words, it was a "dead cert."

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IN "THE MERRY WIDOW."

But how could we keep the facts of our dark horse darker than ever was the main problem. At last I hit upon a brilliant notion. On a dark night I painted the horse black to match the atmosphere in his stable, so that it was impossible to tell which was the atmosphere and which was the horse. When we took it out for gallops we swathed its hoofs with cotton wool so that it should not be heard galloping by any persons of suspicious temperament, and we boiled its oats so that it could not be heard eating.

The horse was thus so very dark that finally we could not find it for a month in the stable. When we stumbled across it again it did not appear to be of much practical use for racing purposes, but, for fear of mislaying it once more, I rubbed its teeth with phosphorus so that we should be able to find it in the future. This, I believe, is the only case on record in which a racehorse has had its teeth rubbed with phosphorus. Fate, however, was unkind. The horse never won a race. Life is full of appalling disappointments, isn't it?

Of other hobbies I have few, except that I am very keen on both shooting and boxing, and rarely miss a "big night" at the National Sporting Club.

A year or so ago I took a trip to Ceylon to chase the merry elephant. One of the incidents of that trip you will see in the illustration on the next page. Did I shoot any elephants? Aha! therein lies a fearsome tale. Alone and unprotected, and armed with a forty-horse-power repeating muzzle-loader, I set out to track the wily elephant in his lair.



AN AMUSING REMINISCENCE OF DRURY LANE.

As luck would have it, however, after the luncheon interval I thoughtlessly mislaid my shooting-iron—forgot to call for it at the cloak-room, or something of the kind. Of a sudden, to my horror, I saw a portly specimen of the elephantisaurus tribe browsing in the long grass. What can I do, I thought, when I remembered that I had forgotten my gun? All would have been well had I had a peashooter or a catapult with me, but there I was unarmed, with the exception of the family toothpick.

"You must use your brains, my lad," I muttered, with puckered brows, as I stealthily advanced through the long grass. And use my brains I did. Bending down on one knee, I threw rocks at that elephant's ribs from an oblique angle until he fairly screamed with laughter, and lay down on his side, whereat, or, rather, whereupon or wherefore, hastily extracting a pin which at the time was looking after a gardenia in my buttonhole, I pinned one of that elephant's

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ON A SHOOTING TRIP IN CEYLON.

ears to his side, seccotined his other ear down, and while he was in that state cleverly tintacked his feet together. And lo and behold, the elephant was mine. Beyond all manner of doubt big-game hunting is great fun.

Unlike many actors, I am a sworn enemy to golf, which is a game I don't play. It is bad for the liver because it is bad for the temper. I used to play at one time, but I found my temper was getting spoilt so rapidly that one day I took my golf sticks to the end of Brighton pier and threw them into the sea, and I have been better ever since.

The comedian has his compensations, of course. His salary, perhaps you will say. Well, believe me, he thoroughly earns that. His chief compensation, I think, lies in the fact that if he does succeed in making people laugh, your "comic" can pat himself on the back and say, "Anyway, I've done something to cheer up the lives of people who have real cares. I've helped them in some slight measure, at any rate. to make them forget their troubles for a short time."

I experienced that feeling of satisfaction to a very pronounced extent not very long ago. I was walking home rather late after supping at a restaurant in the Strand, and when I reached Trafalgar Square I saw an old gentleman standing in dangerous proximity to the fountain, chuckling gleefully to himself, and gurgling, "Good old Graves. I've never laughed so much in all my life before." A minute later, however, it occurred to me that the worthy old fellow must have been doing himself rather too well since leaving the theatre, for he suddenly threw his stick into the water of one of the fountains, turned to the nearest of the Landseer lions, made a clucking noise, and remarked, "Good doggie. Fetch it!"



"GOOD DOGGIE. FETCH IT!"

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BLACKBALLED!

By AUSTIN PHILIPS.

Illustrated by Steven Spurrier.

"I SHALL see Douglas in two hours—in ninety minutes," said the voice of Celia's heart to her as the train passed Sysford Junction, three miles from Belboro' Town. And aloud, and looking at her father, she said, smiling, "Wake up, daddy, and help me get the things together; they're too heavy for me to lift them off the rack!"

"Wake up?" James Moore, as big as Celia was little, took his arm from the window-strap, stood up and lifted the packages down. "Why, I was never more awake in my life. I was only thinking how good it will be to get back to harness after all these idle months."

"Yes, daddy; but it was worth it—to get so splendidly well. And I, too, shall be glad to be home again—oh, so glad, so glad!"

Her father glanced at her. He saw her flushed face and her warm brown sparkling eyes; and in his voice, as he answered her, there lurked that fierce jealousy which he did his honest best to crush back.

"Home, Celia? Yes—and not only home. I think you'll be glad to see your young man."

"Yes, daddy, I shall—very."

Celia spoke impulsively, eagerly, uttering the joy that she felt. Her father started, looked at her almost angrily, then busied himself with the rugs. But not before Celia had seen. And the light went out of her eyes and a sudden blackness came over her, as if the lamp of happiness had been extinguished by her father's jealous mistrusting of the man with whom she was in love. Would she ever, she wondered sadly, bring about liking, trust, and confidence between the two people that she most cared for in the world?

Perhaps James Moore felt what his face had shown her. When he spoke again his voice was controlled and even, and his words were fair and just.

"I have good reports of him—in fact, quite excellent. He really seems to be working very hard."

The train slackened, jerked as the points were traversed, slid slowly into Belboro' station, and a man, black-bearded and cadaverous, pulled open the carriage door. He was Burgoyne, James Moore's manager at the great boot factory in that northern midland town.

"I'm glad to see you back, sir—and you, Miss Celia." He took off his hat, almost as to Royalty. "I hope you're both in the very best of health."

"Splendid, thank you, Mr. Burgoyne. And father's himself once more."

Celia, now on the platform, shook hands with the manager, while a porter entered the compartment to clear it of luggage and wraps. Her father, who had jumped out after her, began talking to Burgoyne hard.

"You must come up to dinner," he said, presently. "I have so much to discuss. Captain Kenyon is coming; but Celia can entertain him, and we can talk over things undisturbed. By the way, I didn't tell you, did I? Celia is going to marry Captain Kenyon quite soon."

"Going to be married!" The manager stared at Celia, who saw a shadow cross his face quickly like a cloud blown across a hillside in a gale. "I—I had no notion—no idea of it. I congratulate you, Miss Celia. I hope you'll be happy — very happy indeed."

"Thank you"—again Celia took the hand that was offered her—"thank you so much. But we mustn't wait any longer—come along, daddy—you must forgive me, Mr. Burgoyne—I'm so anxious to be at home!"

She turned away; her father followed her; their car started; Burgoyne lifted his hat. His face showed grave and worried as Celia looked back and bowed. She shivered and felt a sense of coming trouble. She touched her father on the arm.

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"What's the matter with Mr. Burgoyne, daddy? He looks quite worried—as if he had something on his mind!"

"Oh, nothing—I suppose he's been overworking—he must take a holiday, now that I've come back. Poor chap, it isn't to be wondered at. He's had the whole show to run all these months!"

James Moore resumed his silence. Celia did not speak again. The explanation was reasonable; the sense of trouble left her; there was the joy of the welcome home. An hour later she saw her own small image dressed in that black which, as nothing else, set off her oval face with its small, straight features and her abundant auburn hair. And she turned to the dressing-table and took up and carried to the mantelpiece a photograph in a silver frame.

It was her romance; her very heart's blood; it represented the achievement of the all but impossible; the triumph of her woman's will.

It had come about at Dieppe, where her father had taken a villa, driven there by a nervous breakdown following upon a lost election and the prolonged battle which had built up a great business through a period of thirty years.

"If you don't drop work and slack thoroughly," said the Harley Street physician whom James Moore had consulted, "you'll let yourself in for a stroke. But have an absolute holiday—and you'll be yourself again in a very few months!"

James Moore, with his sound business instincts, had followed the advice he paid for and had taken a villa at Dieppe. His daughter had gone with him. It was on the golf-course that she and Douglas Kenyon had met.

"You see that man," said a Dieppe Englishwoman to her—and pointed to a tall, broad, slim-waisted, bronzed, fair, soldierly-looking golfer who walked with an obvious limp. "He's an instance of really bad luck. Did something quite splendid in India in a hill fight and, at the last minute, a bullet smashed his thigh. They didn't give him a D.S.O. because they didn't want to advertise that there's been any fighting, and the bone was set badly, and he was invalided out. Nice person—very—but a bit melancholy. Shall we ask him to make up a four?"

They had asked him; he had joined the party; he partnered Celia, and they won. A return match was fixed, and others; then Celia's friends went farther into France. The foursome became a twosome; Celia and Captain Kenyon spent hours together on the links. The warm-hearted, human sympathies of Celia went out to this shelved young soldier, and she helped him to forget his woes. They became intimates; they talked of their past and their future; they drifted, hesitated; fell headlong into love. One June evening, on a seat by the sixteenth tee, looking out across the Channel, he had told her all his heart.

"I'm a crock—and I've only twopence-halfpenny—but I do care for you—and I'll make the twopence-halfpenny into fivepence, if I perish in the attempt. Do you think you could manage to care for me? I'm really—it's so hard to express one's self, but I'm really awfully attached!"

"I might manage to care for you if I made a huge effort," said Celia with something that, though all happiness, was as much a sob as a laugh. "And I'll help you to get the fivepence!"

More, just at that minute, Celia had not been allowed to say. But next morning they walked together towards Varengeville, and she gave him all the truth. He learned of her father's opulence; he showed no pleasure; the news seemed, rather, to re-quicken his griefs.

"But it makes it impossible—impossible, Celia," he kept saying. "I can't sponge on your father and I can't give you what you've always had. We must—my dear, it——"

"Nonsense—don't say such things. You can do something—even though you can't kill people any more!" Then Celia found means to cheer and work for the man who held her heart.

It had not been easy. Her father, who idolized her and who could not bear the thought of losing her, had been bitter in his jealousy and full of cruel gibes. He had called Kenyon an adventurer; he had fairly lost his head. "I refuse absolutely," he had ended. "I decline to have anything to do with the fellow; he has no money; he will never make any; and if you must marry, marry someone at Belboro' who is a worker and a man!"

Celia had answered him, very quietly, very unprovocatively, her elbow on the mantelpiece, a small foot upon the fender of the empty fire.

"My dearest daddy," she said—and marvelled at her own courage, for James Moore, though a man of strong affections, was terrible to defy—"you don't—you

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won't—let yourself be fair, and, to my thinking, it's as hard to stand still and be shot at as to sit in an office ordering people about. But you must use your own judgment, daddy—and if you *won't* give your consent, I must take the alternative that is left!"

"And that is?"

"I shall marry Douglas and come back to Belboro' and live in a small house while he gets some job and doubles the three hundred that he's got. I say Belboro', because nothing would induce me to be out of reach of you in case you're ill again—and I think—when you're less angry—you'll always want me near by. But I mean what I say—and I shall marry him at the end of the summer, as soon as we get back home!"

Then—with a brave face, a beating heart, and an inward fear and terror—Celia had left her father alone; left him face to face with the prospect of his daughter living in Belboro' in a villa and of her defiance of him being the talk of all the town. His rage had been the rage of a strong and domineering man who is thwarted where he least expects thwarting, and who sees no way to gain his objective—save perhaps by going round.

By going round. That was the thought which flashed upon him; that matured and became a scheme. At dinner, that evening, he had addressed his daughter thus:—

"I've been thinking over matters, Celia, and to thwart your wishes and be unjust to Captain Kenyon are the last things that I desire. Bring him to me at twelve tomorrow morning, and I'll see what can be done. There may be room for him in the business, after all!"



"ONE JUNE EVENING, ON A SEAT BY THE SIXTEENTH TEE, LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE CHANNEL, HE HAD TOLD HER ALL HIS HEART."

"Daddy, you're a perfect old darling"—Celia had risen and hugged him on the spot. "I know you'll like Douglas—and you're being an absolute brick!"

Her father had winced under her kisses, but his scheme remained unchanged. In the morning Douglas Kenyon came to him. James Moore listened—and asked. After an hour's cross-examination of the soldier, the manufacturer proffered his plan.

"Doubtless Celia has mentioned the matter; let me make my proposal clear. At present I know little about you; your parents are dead; you have merely a pittance and no career. So I propose to test your

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powers of application and your inclination for hard work. If you care to take your coat off and work amongst the hands and clerks in my factory—and if I get good reports of you—I will consider the question of taking you into partnership on my return. Does the proposition appeal to you? I should like to know at once!"

"It does appeal to me enormously, sir. I accept with pleasure and——"

"When will you be ready to go?"

Douglas Kenyon had looked at his watch.

"I'm afraid I can't catch the afternoon boat," he said. "It goes in less than an hour. But to-night—I can certainly go to-night!"

James Moore stared at him, perplexed exceedingly, striving to discover whether this readiness was but the adroit trick of an adventurer who would make a show of zeal. Then he gave a little smile. If it was bluff—in his heart he hoped it was—so much the better that the other should be punished by being taken at his word.

"Very well, Mr.—er—Captain Kenyon," he answered. "You shall start to-night—as you suggest. You can present yourself to Mr. Burgoyne, the manager of my Belboro' factory: I will write to him at once. We shall meet again in November, when I return to resume my work." And, as he finished the sentence, James Moore had stood up.

Douglas Kenyon had risen also; the two men had shaken hands, each regarding the other with measuring looks. Next evening Kenyon was at Belboro': on the Monday he had begun his work. But that he was Celia's future husband Burgoyne had no idea. James Moore intended that if Douglas Kenyon proved a sluggard there should be no slur upon any save upon Douglas Kenyon himself.

And every report of his future son-in-law's diligence jogged James Moore's jealousy, so that it was very visible, and hard for Celia to endure. But she said nothing. For she believed in the future and her man.

She believed in him, and she was very proud of him—for had not her belief been justified!—and her face was radiant as, now home again, she stood by the mantelpiece with the photograph in her hand. Then she gave a touch to the lace on her shoulders and went quickly down the stairs.

"Father must come to like him," she said to herself. "He must, he will, he *shall!*"

In the drawing-room stood Douglas Kenyon, less bronzed and a good deal paler, yet a fine and manly figure, despite his permanent limp. He came forward; he drew her to him and kissed her. Their kiss meant to Celia very many and beautiful things.

"My dear, I'm so glad to see you," she said presently—and drew herself a little away from him. "And you make me tremendously proud!"

"Proud, Celia! Why?"

"Because you've worked so hard."

"But that's rather what men are in the world for!"

"Yes: I know—but——"

Celia paused. Kenyon stooped to kiss her; but the door opened and Celia drew quickly away. James Moore entered; with him Burgoyne, cadaverous, black-bearded, nervous in all social intercourse as he was strong in business life. James Moore took Kenyon's hand.

"I'm glad to have such excellent accounts of you," he said.

"I'm very glad to think that I've given Mr. Burgoyne satisfaction."

"Yes—yes—indeed you have"—the manager broke in. "And I—I—Mr. Moore has told me—I congratulate you and Miss Celia—I hope you'll be very happy indeed!"

The gong sounded, cutting conversation short. The meal was not a merry one; James Moore was making an effort to be civil, and succeeding, though the effort was plain. Kenyon talked naturally, unrestrainedly, answering James Moore's questions about boot-making; and Burgoyne, now and then, interposed. But Burgoyne—Celia was certain of it—seemed more than ordinarily nervous; he was agitated, worried, constrained. And again Celia had that strange consciousness that trouble was looming in the air.

Presently James Moore gave business a little rest.

"I suppose," he began—"I take it you have had little time for social intercourse. You have good rooms—you are quite comfortable, I hope?"

"Quite—my landlady is an admirable person—and she cooks exceedingly well!"

"That's good; and you've made some acquaintances—you go out at all?"

"Nowhere." Captain Kenyon smiled a little. "You see, I've been too busy for that!"

"And the club"—James Moore meant to know all about things—"how do you like it? I suppose it's a great relaxation—you go there a great deal?"

Burgoyne coughed nervously. Kenyon

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looked quite nonplussed. Celia's heart quickened—for no apparent cause.

"The club! What club? Oh," a light broke upon the speaker. "The Town Club—oh, no. I haven't been inside the doors!"

"What!—you don't care for club life?"

"Yes—very much—but you see I'm not a member—though I recollect Mr. Burgoyne saying that he meant to put me up. But I suppose he forgot—he's been so busy——"

"Busy!" James Moore turned to Burgoyne. "But I wrote to him, specially, telling him to see it through. Surely, Burgoyne, you didn't let it escape you? I was most particular—most emphatic—and, why, I remember now—you wrote to say it had been done!"

The manufacturer glared at his manager; the manager glanced nervously round. Douglas Kenyon looked straight in front of him, as if he did not want to listen while the overworked Burgoyne was reproached for a trivial neglect. Celia regarded Kenyon and her father; then her eyes rested upon Burgoyne's nervous face.

"Am I to understand that you neglected my instructions and furnished me with false information?" went on James Moore.

Burgoyne hesitated, gave a side glance at Kenyon, looked hopelessly, appealingly at Celia, and stammered out his reply.

"I—I did put up Captain Kenyon. I got Mr. Stokes, the club secretary, to second him, too. But for some reason or other Captain Kenyon failed to satisfy the members—the whole club votes, you know, sir—and the election did not come about!"

"What!"

The exclamation came from father and daughter; then, swift upon it, came a merry laugh. And Douglas Kenyon, smiling broadly, for the first time intervened.

"In other words, Mr. Burgoyne, they blackballed me! Would it be impertinent to ask why?"

"I don't know. I only know that Cameron, the treasurer, hinted to Stokes that Captain Kenyon's candidature had better be withdrawn. Cameron only told me this afterwards."

"After the blackballing!" The old mistrust, blotting out his own sense of fairness and knowledge of his future son-in-law's industry, was reasserting itself in the manufacturer now. "But the members of the club of which I am president do not blackball people for fun. There must be some special reason—some facts within their knowledge—to bring such an action about. Perhaps Captain Kenyon can enlighten us—if he cares!" And James Moore's question ended on a sneering note..

Douglas Kenyon did not immediately answer. His lips twitched. He looked at Celia first. She was looking down at her plate. She was wondering whether, in his hot youth, the man she loved so dearly had been guilty of some boyish, yet discreditable, escapade. She looked up when Kenyon began to speak.

"I am afraid I can throw no light upon the matter," he was saying—and his voice gave coldness for coldness. "To tell you the truth I am not interested in the least. If a provincial club likes to pill a man of whom it knows nothing—well, I don't care a tinker's——"

Kenyon stopped, brought up by the frantic signals of Celia, who had caught his eye. James Moore spoke promptly. His voice—Celia was only too well aware of it—was alive with satisfaction—and hope.

"We will probe this matter to the bottom," he said. "For the present we will discuss it no more. Celia, we will bring our cigars into the drawing-room and——"

"But I thought you wanted to talk over things with Mr. Burgoyne, daddy!"

"I did. But I've changed my mind. If you are ready, let us go into the drawing-room now!"

Celia rose. Kenyon opened the door for her; James Moore and Burgoyne came behind. Coffee was brought; cigars were lighted; the conversation became stilted, formal; then it waned and died. Burgoyne was miserable; James Moore was cold and thoughtful, obviously pondering a scheme. Kenyon was white with anger; Celia was at her wits' end. But the idea of a boyish escapade—and its consequences—passed from her; she knew that her lover's indignation was genuine; she only feared that he might lose his temper and say something bitter that James Moore would never forgive. She loved her father, for all his domineering and his prejudices; she knew his feelings; she understood. And she had the vision to see that, if things were not ruined by rashness, out of transient trouble might come solid and lasting good.

At last Kenyon seemed as if he could stand the atmosphere no more.

"If you don't mind, sir," he began, "I should like to settle this absurd misunderstanding immediately. I think——"

James Moore waved a silencing hand.

"I refuse absolutely to discuss the matter.

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This is neither the time nor the place. I will see you in my room at the factory to-morrow, at half-past ten."

"But——"

Kenyon caught an imploring glance from Celia, left his words unspoken, and then got up to go. James Moore, that Kenyon might have no speech with Celia, accompanied them both to the door. He returned with his daughter to the drawing-room and called Burgoyne by name.

"Come along to my study!" he said. "We can talk over things better there. No, Celia, I would rather you did not join us. It is a serious matter—very—and I do not want to give you pain."

"Very well, daddy, then. I'm tired, and I'll say good-night!"

"Good-night, Celia." James Moore bent and kissed her and walked towards the door. Then he turned and spoke again. His voice was very serious—yet it was horribly full of hope.

"This is a grave matter," he said. "Clubs do not blackball men without good reason and cause. You must be prepared for the worst, Celia. I want you to understand fully how bad a thing this is."

He went out. Celia walked to a bureau, took pen and paper and wrote. The letter was long, sympathetic, encouraging, soothing and wise. And hope, now, was very high in her; since she beheld the lights of the harbour of happiness on the shore of the sea of doubt.

The last paragraph of her letter was this:—

"So when you see father in the morning—however rude he is to you—keep cool, and say nothing that you can afterwards regret. Remember, he is very fond of me—and he hates the idea of losing me—and I do want him to come to like you—and I know that he will do—if only you can stand what he says till he finds he's in the wrong. He's too straight to bear malice if he finds he's really mistaken in you, and it's the very way, perhaps, by which he'll come to like you in the end. Of course I believe in you absolutely—and it's some silly mistake of Mr. Burgoyne's, and it will all come right quite soon!"

She covered the letter and gave it to a maid to post. Then she went to bed and slept the whole night through. For she was tired out by her journey and by all that had happened, and her mind was at rest absolutely, because she had faith in her man.

She came down at eight-thirty to breakfast; she found her father gone; his work, his eagerness to get back to it, had pulled him to the office betimes. Presently she went out, took tram, and descended at the factory gates, a delicious, fur-clad figure, for it was very wintry and cold. She went straight to her father's room. She knocked, and, without waiting for an answer, she went in.

Her father was in his chair. Beside him was Burgoyne, and opposite were two men: one short, pompous, and bald-headed; the other spectacled and thin.

James Moore looked up.

"What have you come for, Celia?" he asked.

"To see fair play, daddy, if you please. And when——"

There was a knock at the door. Celia stopped short. Burgoyne, at a nod from the manufacturer, ushered Kenyon into the room. The soldier advanced, very neat and correct in his *tenue*, and very stern of face. James Moore gave him a cold nod, and rose.

"Mr. Stokes and Mr. Cameron, Captain Kenyon. The secretary and the treasurer of the club."

Messrs. Stokes and Cameron rose and put out their hands. But they withdrew them when they saw Douglas Kenyon's stiff bow. There was a pause. Then James Moore pursued.

"This is the gentleman whom I have summoned you to see. Doubtless you know him very well by repute!"

The secretary looked at the treasurer; the treasurer looked back at the secretary. The secretary—Stokes—was beaming; and the treasurer—Cameron—was the colour of white lead.

"I—I know nothing of this gentleman," he said, breathlessly. "Nothing, either for or against!"

"What!" James Moore stared at him incredulously. "I don't understand you in the least. Didn't you warn Mr. Stokes—who seconded the candidate—that he and Burgoyne would do wisely to withdraw Captain Kenyon's name?"

The treasurer did not answer; he looked miserably round the room. He escaped James Moore's keen glance, to see Kenyon's contemptuous one; he met Burgoyne's eyes to find them indignant; he turned from Celia's smile of hope (that was becoming happiness) to see the secretary's beaming face. Then he made his reply; jerking it out like a prisoner who has gone into the box to give evidence and whom a clever barrister is turning inside out.

"I suppose I did," he said. "Yes, I may as well say that I did!"

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"Why?"

There was no answer. Everybody leaned forward, expectant. James Moore was turkey-red. He guessed at some misunderstanding; he was furious because he saw that Kenyon must be exonerated, and he was furious with the treasurer who had made him—James Moore—look a fool. His voice, as he repeated the question, had the roughness of a rasp.

"*Why?* I insist upon knowing, Cameron. It's no use sitting there like a stuck pig!"

Even now the treasurer did not reply to him directly. His answer took the form of a denunciation; he swung round at the plump and beaming creature at his side.

"It's *your* doing, Stokes!" he almost shouted. "It's you and that double-dashed snobbery of yours. If you hadn't gone round the club, canvassing people to blackball my candidate, Adrian Elwood, I shouldn't have retaliated by getting your *protégé* pilled. I may have made a mistake, Mr. Moore"—he looked, at last, at the manufacturer—"and I'm ready to make my apologies—but I'm hanged if I make them alone. Stokes started the business—and it's Stokes who's most to blame!"

"I'm not. I only did my duty. The club——"

James Moore's fist met the table with a bang. He was beaten—and he knew it—



"WHY? I INSIST UPON KNOWING, CAMERON."

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in his hope to hear ill of Douglas Kenyon; he was going to cover his defeat by dealing out retribution to those who had let him in. Burgoyne, innocent of the whole matter, looked happy and eager to hear. Celia thrust her hand into Douglas Kenyon's hand; they both were smiling; each looked on as at a play. James Moore addressed the plump secretary in stern tones.

"Am I to understand, Mr. Stokes, that you took steps to have Mr. Adrian Elwood blackballed when Mr. Cameron put him up for election?"

"I did." The plump little secretary was braver than the treasurer at least.

"Why?"

"Because"—the secretary looked round for sympathy and found none from anyone—"because he's *retail*, Mr. Moore. It was against all precedent to elect him. He has shops in his own name—shops!"

There was a chuckle from Douglas Kenyon, a gay light laugh from Celia, an exclamation from Burgoyne, from James Moore a stifled oath. The manufacturer's voice was full of infinite contempt.

"Of all the priceless snobbery, *that* takes the first prize! Adrian Elwood does—did—run shops—and retail ones—but he's the best speaker in Belboro'—the strong man of the Town Council—and you aren't fit to lick his boots!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, you're no better, Cameron"—James Moore swung round upon the treasurer—"you're no better, I tell you—you lent yourself to a base intrigue. You blackballed a British officer—a distinguished British officer—(Celia's hand twitched in Douglas Kenyon's)—blackballed him, out of a mean and petty revenge. I resign my presidency—and as landlord of the club premises I give your committee six months' notice to quit. I no longer see any reason to let for a nominal figure a building for which I can get ten times the rent. And"—James Moore delivered the last blow with infinite and obvious enjoyment—"and as Captain Kenyon is going to marry my daughter the treasurer's conduct is a personal insult which is too gross for me to forgive!"

"Captain Kenyon—marry Miss Celia—your future son-in-law!" The secretary and the treasurer spoke in one breath.

"Yes. That is the case, gentlemen. Do not let me detain you any longer. I have nothing further to add!"

James Moore rose. He glanced at Burgoyne. Burgoyne held open the door. The secretary and the treasurer—what had they to say to their committee!—stood looking at each other in despair. Celia saw their misery, withdrew her hand from Kenyon's, walked forward and interposed.

"Daddy, don't be hard on them. After all it doesn't matter now!"

"This is my affair, Celia." James Moore, thoroughly enjoying himself, waved his daughter back. "Besides, according to Mr. Stokes's *precedent*, I can remain president no longer—I am not even eligible for membership now!"

The plump little secretary took a step forward, twisting nervous hands.

"I—I—I don't understand, sir. I—I really—I——"

"Don't you?" James Moore smiled grimly. "Well, just let me explain. I bought Adrian Elwood's shops after the election, that he might be free to become my—our candidate—and I propose to run them separately from my factory—and they will bear the name of James Moore. I, too, shall be retail. I shall no longer be eligible for membership, and——"

"But, sir"—the secretary came forward, humbly—"there *is* no precedent, and I apologize—I am sure Mr. Cameron will apologize—can't you rectify things? You'll revise your decision——"

"Yes, do, father." Again Celia left Douglas Kenyon's side. "Yes, *please* do—it will all be so easy to put straight!"

James Moore did not answer her; but he leaned back in his chair. He glanced at Celia; his eyes rested keenly, yet with grudging approval, upon Kenyon for quite an appreciable time. He was beaten; but he was strong enough to make a victory in the skirmish with two nonentities cover his rout in the main engagement with the man whom his daughter loved. And he gave the skirmish even added import by granting generous quarter to the beaten foe.

"Well, I will not be hard on you," he said. "I will revise my decision upon one consideration alone."

"And that, sir?" The secretary and treasurer spoke with one voice.

"That Mr. Stokes shall propose Adrian Elwood, whom he intrigued against, and that you, Cameron, shall propose Captain Kenyon, whom you canvassed the members to blackball. If you can promise to do this, and to send them both—and me—a letter of apology, I will continue my presidency and renew the lease. But if Mr. Stokes still retains his horror of 'retail,' and you

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hold to your prejudices against gentlemen who have borne His Majesty's commission——"

"But we don't. We will certainly do as you suggest, sir!" Again the secretary and the treasurer spoke in a single breath.

"Very good. Then go and set about it. Good morning, gentlemen. I have claims upon my time. Burgoyne——"

The manager held the door open, ushering the two men out. He glanced at the manufacturer, got a nod, and disappeared. James Moore, every instinct of conquest gratified, gave a merry laugh.

"That's all right," he said. "They won't play that sort of trick again. I am glad—thoroughly glad—that all has come out so well!"

Then, in the pleasure of his victory — though he did not apologize, the manufacturer did the next best thing—he extended his hand to Kenyon, frankly, readily, without jealousy—and in token of permanent goodwill. Kenyon took it, shook it; then was pushed aside. Celia, in a moment, had her arms round her father's neck.

"You're an old darling, after all, daddy," she whispered. And, with a smack quite resounding, she kissed a bald patch on the top of her father's head.

She kissed it with affection and she kissed it with satisfaction as well. For out of temporary trouble had come lasting good fortune and her father approved her *fiancé*—and was not her end achieved!



"'YOU'RE AN OLD DARLING, AFTER ALL, DADDY,' SHE WHISPERED."

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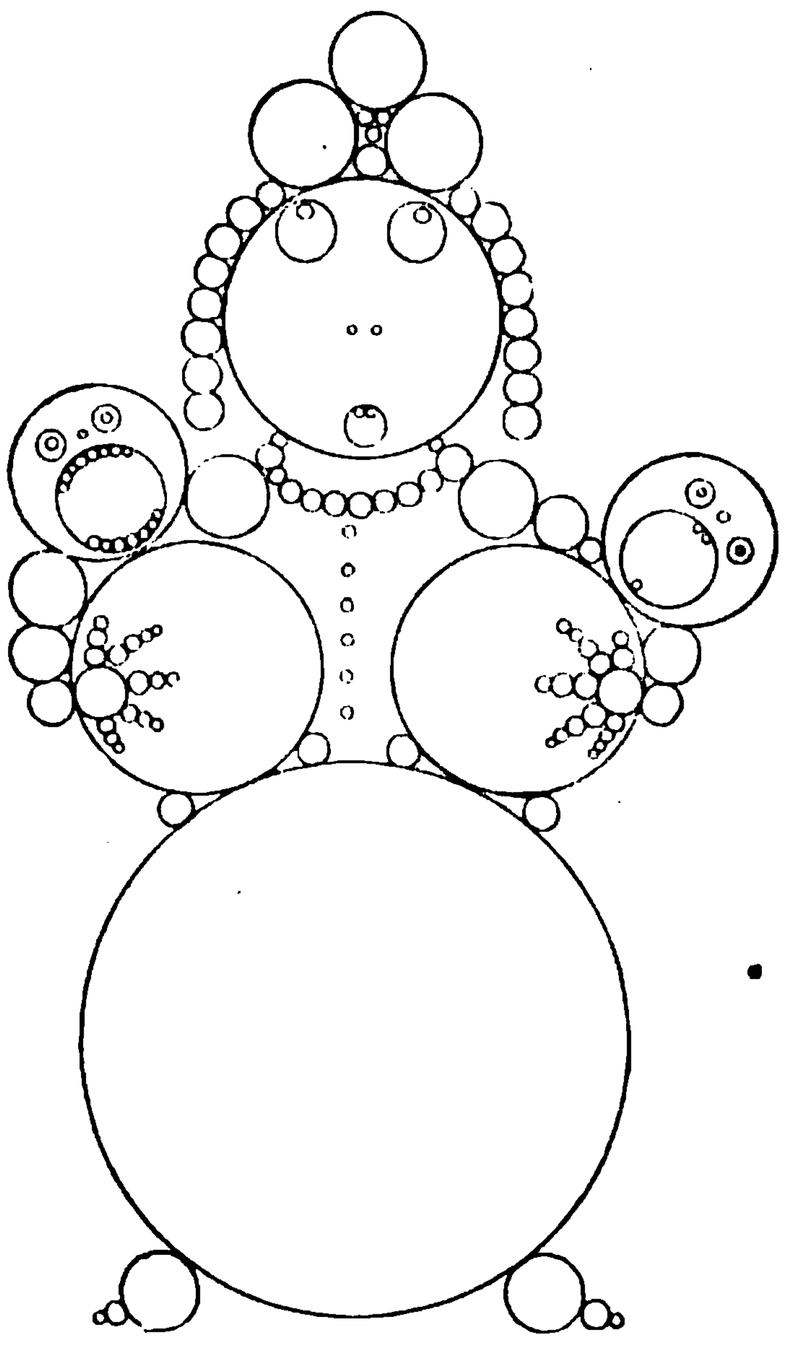
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The Last Word in Art:

THE GEOMETRISTS.

THE old, slow-going days when art was the only unprogressive activity in the world—these days are gone; and, by way of making up for its delay on the road, art is now tearing ahead at a pace that leaves science, politics, and everything else staggering painfully in the rear, miles behind. Art is treading on its own heels, butting itself in the back, and falling over its own shadow—going so fast that it is reported to be already out of sight for all ordinary lookers-on.

It seems but yesterday that the stolid ones of the world were aghast at the audacities of the Impressionists, and scarcely the day before that the "cockney impudence" of Whistler was vindicated in a court of law. It is difficult to believe that more than a few hours have passed since the Post-Impressionists dumbfounded the town with random dabs of thick paint; and yet they are old-fashioned already, for the Cubists and the Futurists have followed and blotted them out. The Futurists are artful in their choice of title, for nothing can possibly get ahead of the future; but in practice they are already *passé* by the Geometrists, some of whose masterpieces illustrate this article.



NO. I.—THE TWINS AND THEIR NURSE.

(Circles.)

BY W. HEATH ROBINSON.

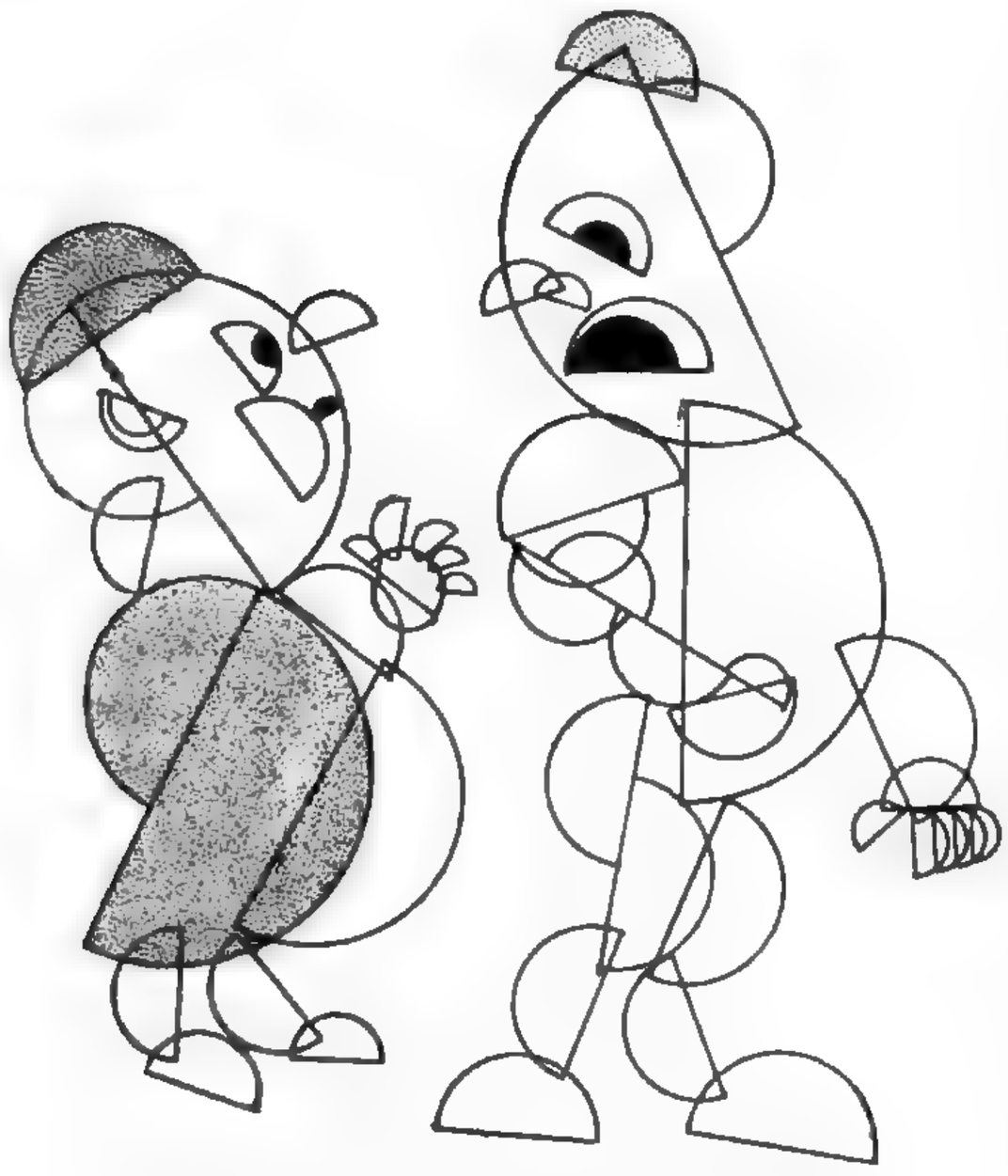
The stolid conservatism of the Cubists gave the Geometrists their opportunity. The Cubist should know better than to stick to his cube—that way lies stagnation; you must stick to nothing nowadays, and at nothing, or you will be left in the hopeless distance. When you have painted a picture in cubes you should go on and paint more in triangles, circles, polygons, parallelograms, trapeziums, dodecahedrons, conic sections, and what not. The Cubists should have seen that; but they lost their opportunity, and the Geometrists have done it first. And it is a glory of THE STRAND MAGAZINE—yet another glory—that foremost in the ranks of the new school gallop several of its best-known illustrators, neck and neck with other geometrical innovators as yet strangers to our readers.

It is the claim of all the innovators—Post-Impressionists, Symbolists, Cubists, Futurists, and the rest—that by their novel methods they express the inner and more recondite unutterability of the indistinguishable, or thereabouts. But it is quite evident that the painter who limits his means of expression to the solid, uncompromising right-angled cube narrows his range to the expression of the more stodgy, solid, and commonplace unutterabilities. The Geometrist, free as air, has at his disposal the rotund, bubbling jollity of the circle, the upstart sharpness of the isosceles triangle, the unaccommodating antagonism of the trapezium, the many-sided versatility of the polygon, and an infinity more of such resources, as you may see from the masterpieces here reproduced.

To begin with a circular specimen, by Mr. W. Heath Robinson, a very distinguished member of the Geometrist fraternity, whose work in the new manner has never before been shown to the public. Here, in his sweetly idyllic picture of the twins with their nurse (No. 1). Mr. Heath Robinson has exploited the symbolic language of the circle to its highest

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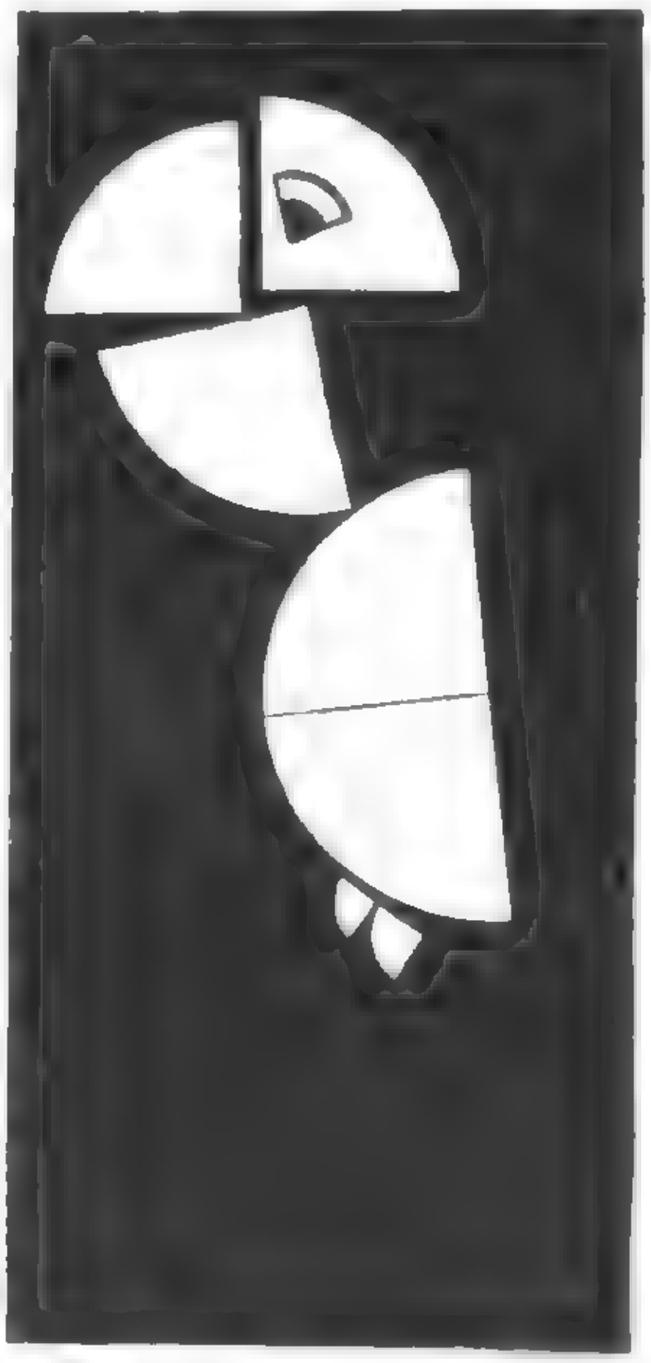
NO. 2.—CAPITAL AND LABOUR.
(Semicircles.)
By H. M. BATEMAN.

degree. Art gains its effects by association of ideas; and what geometric figure can express with one half the emphasis of the round, wide "O" the howls of the interesting infants? Healthy chubbiness is expressed by the same circle, and with a subtle inspiration possible only to genius the artist has given us a cunning demonstration of the comparative "forwardness" of the pair by the respective number of little circles standing for teeth. Thus we perceive that while the twin on the nurse's left arm has "cut" but three teeth, that on the right is comfortably through most of his dental difficulties with a score of fifteen. Not wholly without trouble has he arrived at this consummation, however, nor is his brother giving no trouble now, as may plainly be judged from the turning up of the circular eyes of the circular nurse, and the open protest of her circular mouth. As for the nurse herself, what other method could so well indicate the all-round qualities of that excellent woman?

The fact that it is possible to use the semicircle with no division or diminution of the significance of the circle is made plain by Mr. H. M. Bateman, another revolutionist who here first appears in his true colours. By the use of semicircles alone he has built up his great allegorical cartoon, "Capital and Labour" (No. 2). The semicircle here plainly suggests the division of the daily round of work into two—the part of capital and the part of labour; and the pursiness of the one and the lumpy muscularity of the other are subtly suggested by the forms used. Labour opens its mouth enormously widely, as is proper; the scoopiness of the fingers of both labour and capital has its obvious meaning; while the entangled complication of their relations and the enmeshed perplexity of the problems they offer is typified by the general resemblance of each figure in this masterpiece to a penny wire puzzle in the throes of hopeless impossibility.

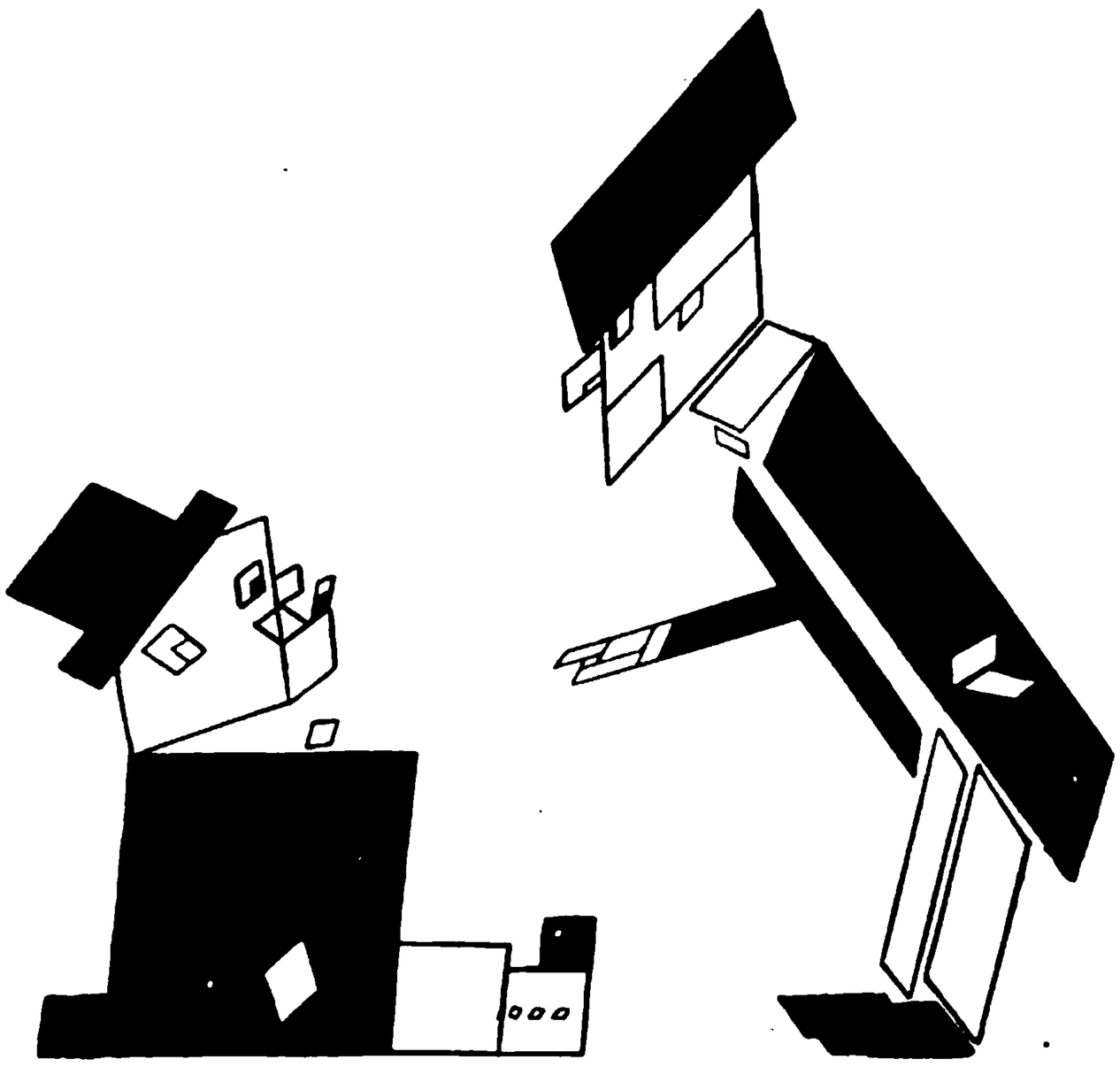
Indeed, you may divide your circle into four, and the fragments, hydra-like, will each maintain its separate life and meaning, varied but not a whit diminished. This is proved and exemplified by Mr. Alfred Leete in the first of several masterpieces herewith reproduced—the one with the title "Pretty Polly Puffin" (No. 3). If simplicity be a quality in art, here we have quality in the highest. A few quadrants lying at haphazard—or they might be fans—tell the whole tale; and the association of quadrants—though perhaps now superseded by sextants—with the sea, by which the puffin lives, makes one cunning link of meaning, which the wild Symbolist will not hesitate to reinforce by a reference to the puffin' which is the business of fans. By the latest rules, the Symbolist who uses an argument like this is allowed fifteen seconds to escape from the premises.

Mr. Leete is one of the most active of the new school, and he has pushed his experiments far and wide—all over Euclid's definitions, in fact. The pictures we have already dealt with are each built up of a single geometrical figure, but now we find the pioneer combining different figures in one work. Cautiously at first, however. The rhombus and the rhomboid are as near each other in character as two geometrical figures can be, and may



NO. 3.—PRETTY POLLY PUFFIN.
(Quadrants.)
By ALFRED LEETE.

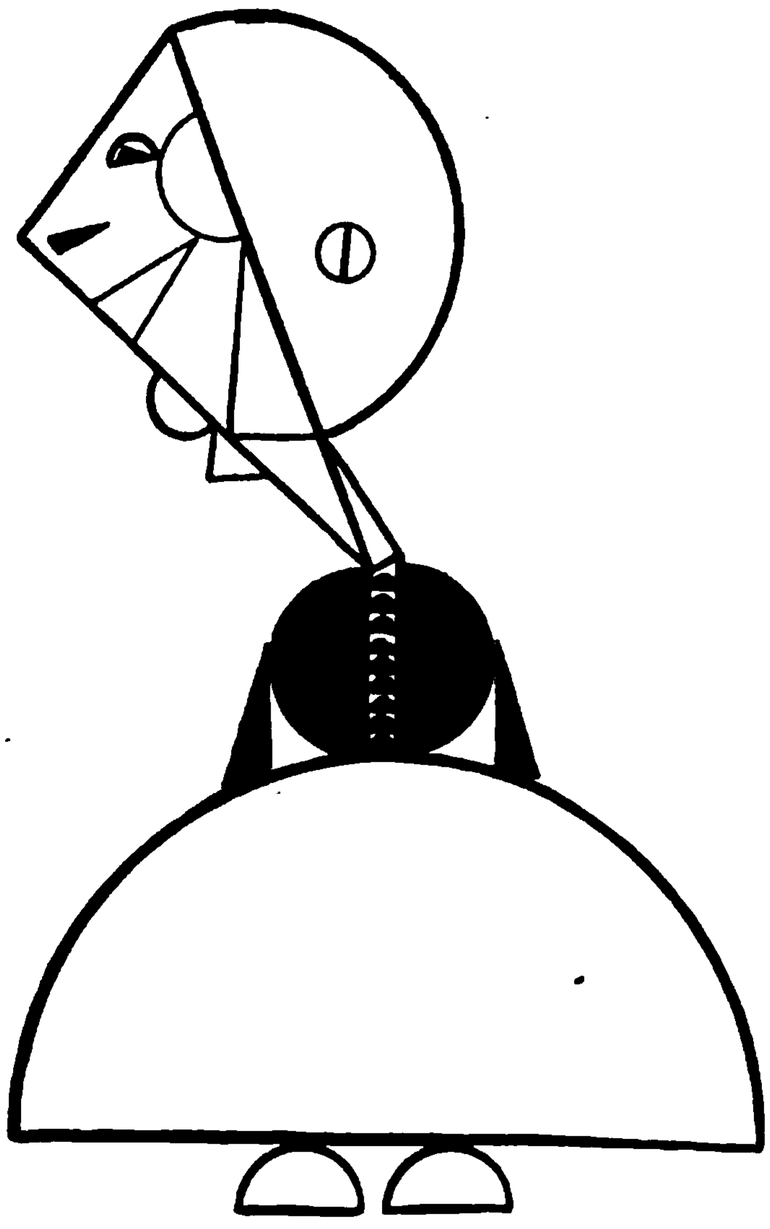
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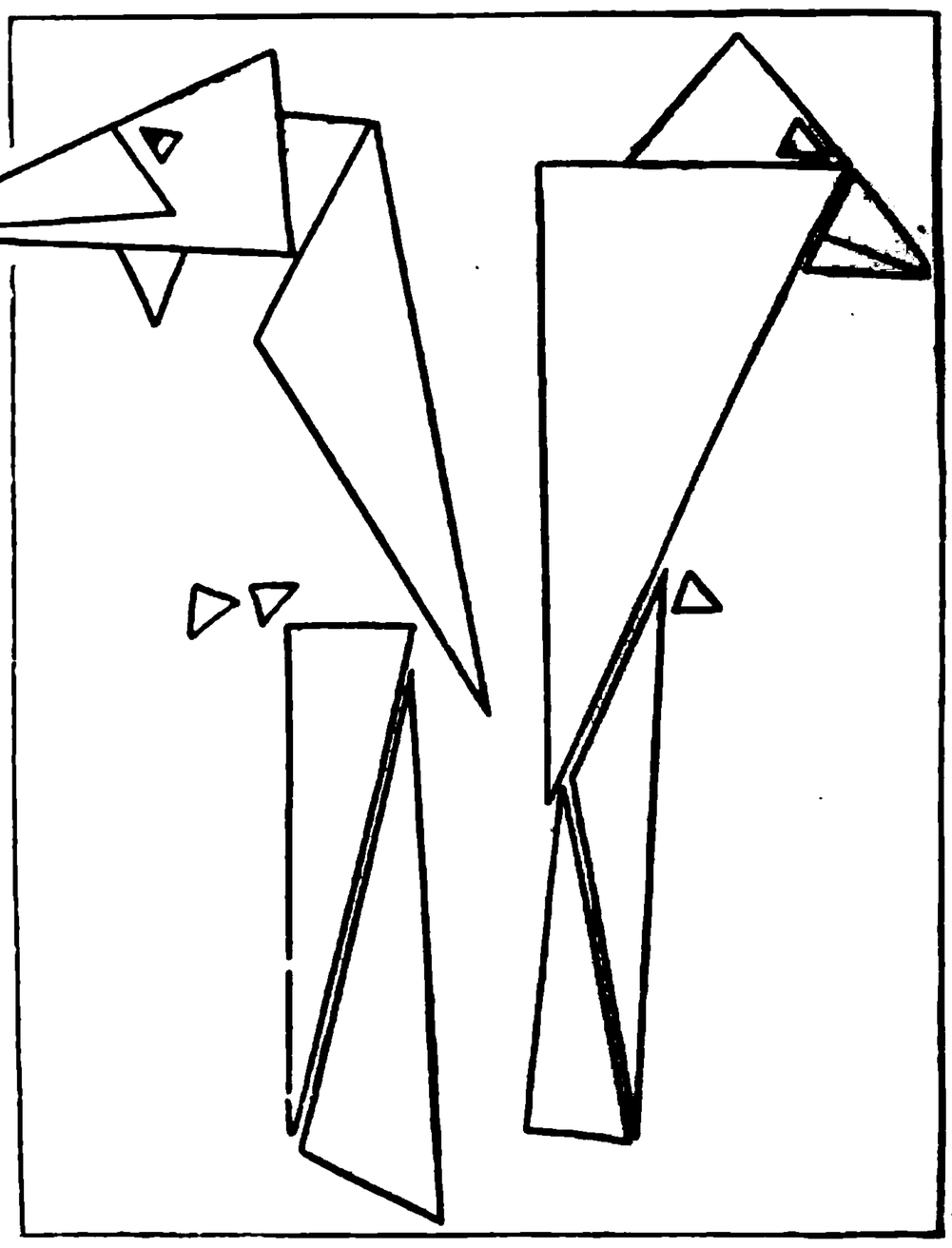
NO. 4. — PROFESSOR RHOMBOID REPROVES PROFESSOR RHOMBUS FOR UNSEEMLY BEHAVIOUR.
(Rhombus and Rhomboid.)
By ALFRED LEETE.

well be used to express the hard and angular dispositions of the learned pundits represented in the dramatic meeting of the professors. The equal-sided, evenly-disposed, and altogether more solid and human Professor Rhombus, though prevented by the general slant and slope of unsteady circumstances from maintaining a respectable perpendicular, nevertheless proclaims himself altogether a more agreeable and genial character than the strait-laced, narrow, stiff, acrid, and sharper-angled Rhomboid who rebukes him (No. 4). So that the beautiful lesson is made plain that even in hard and angular dispositions there are degrees, and that a rhombustious person is usually to be preferred before one who allows his parallelogramaticisms to develop to the extreme of rhomboidery. This last, indeed, is a maxim which should be woven in letters of gold round the hat of every ardent Geometrist whose swollen head affords sufficient accommodation.

In his next development we see Mr. Leete combining in his design elements of wider diversity—the semicircle and the triangle—the triangle of three different sorts—right-angled,



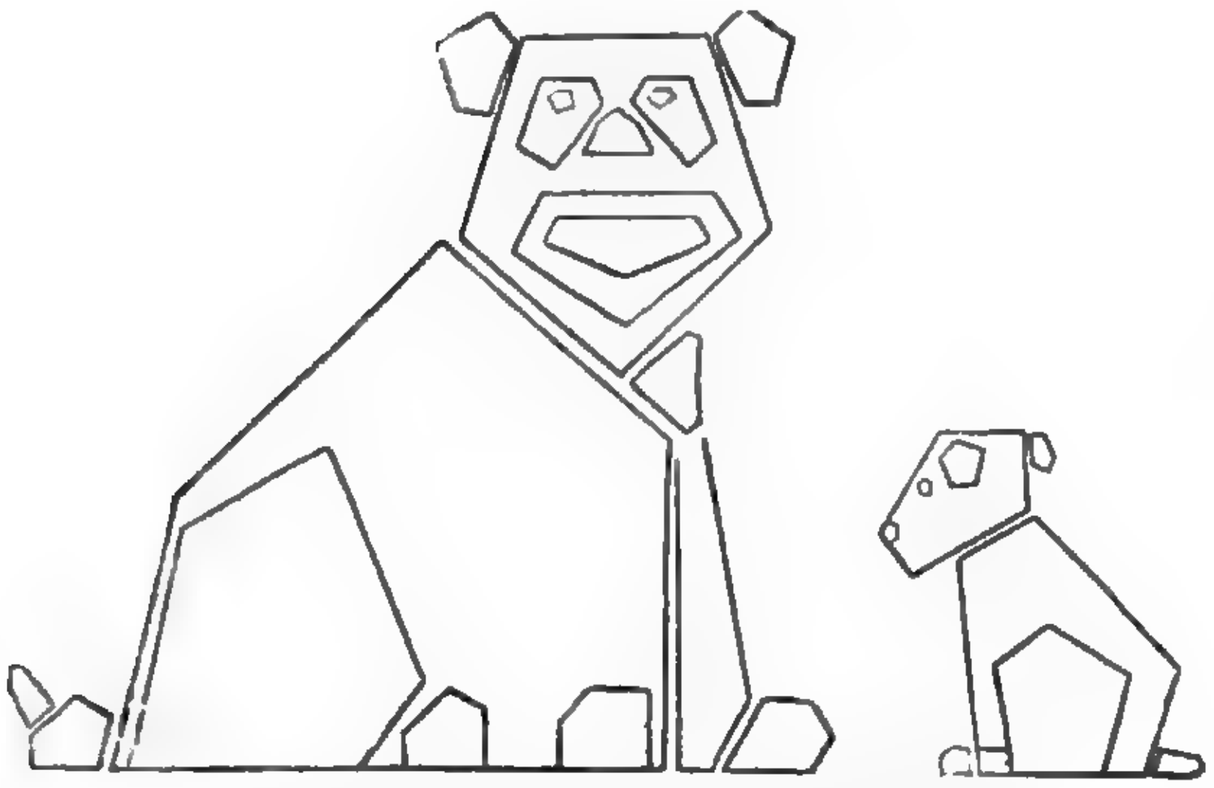
NO. 5.—A VOLENDAM HER.
(Semicircles and Triangles.)
By ALFRED LEETE.



NO. 6.—A TIFF.
(Triangles.)
By AMBROSE CHEW.

isosceles, and scalene. The subject is a young lady of Volendam (No. 5)—or a Volendam her, as Mr. Leete prefers to call her, with the simple humour cultivated by the Geometrists. It is to Volendam that all artists go in search of wooden shoes, mob caps, baggy trousers, and other art treasures of the Dutch sort, and the Volendammers give a deal of their time and trouble to making as much as possible out of their visitors; so that, as we see suggested in the picture, the daily round of toil has become only a half-round, and the fisher-people try so many impositions on the artists

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NO. 7.—DIGNITY AND IMPUDENCE.

(Pentagons.)

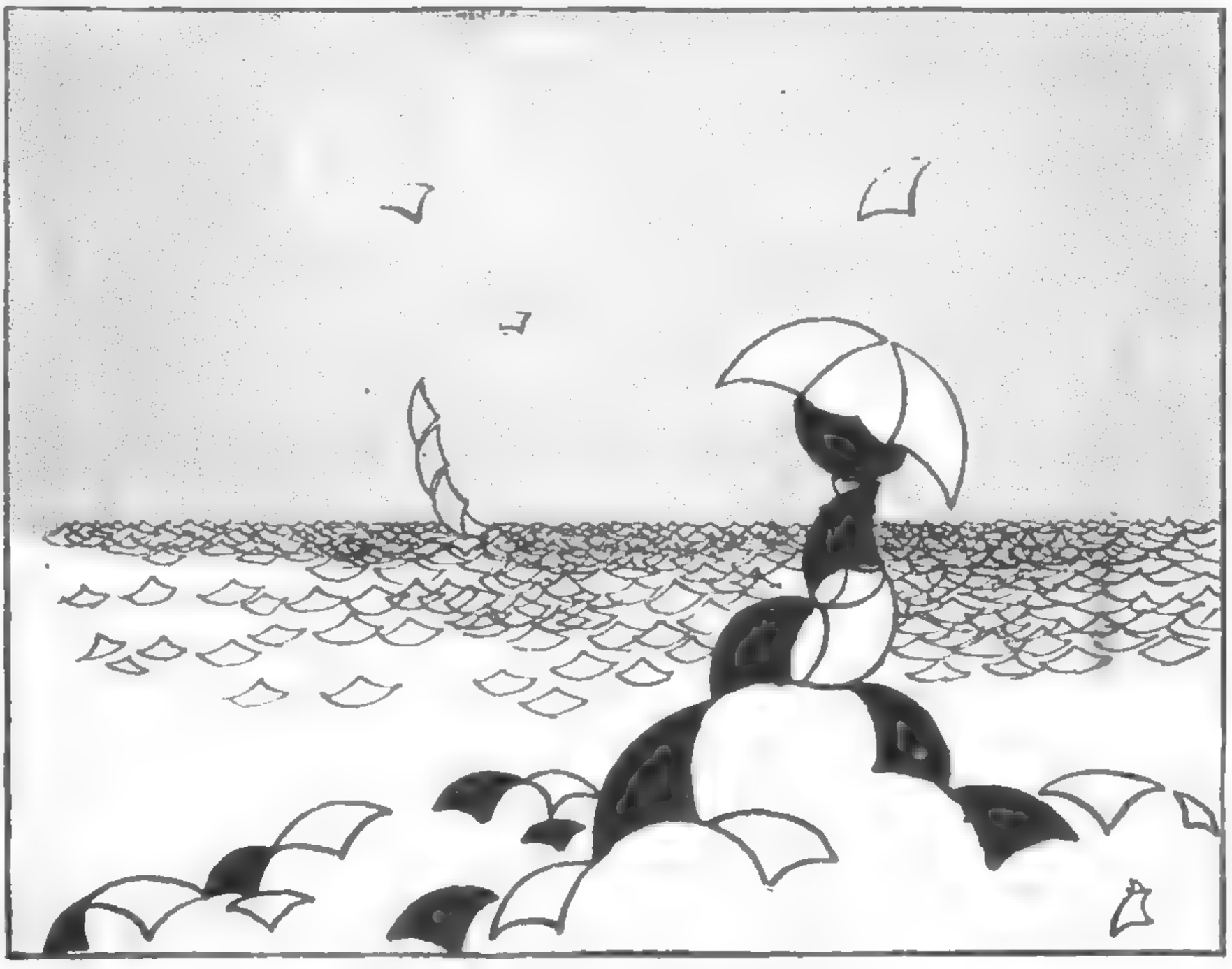
By AMBROSE CHEW.

that they might as well be called trianglers as anything else. (Here the fifteen seconds rule comes into operation.)

Hail we now Mr. Ambrose Chew, purest of the Geometrists in so far at any rate that he begins and continues his artistic career in geometrism, with no preliminary canter in the effete methods now supplanted. Mr. Chew is an *animalier*, works in the severest style of the art, and does not mix his geometrics. First we have an arrangement in triangles over the title "A Tiff" (No. 6). Now it is always a characteristic of the great master in art that he invariably leaves something to the imagination of the beholder, and by this test we clearly discern the great mastery of Mr. Chew, for nothing but an effort of imagination will determine the species of the pair of birds sulking back to back on their invisible perch. Moreover, you may imagine the birds to be of any sort you please, from parrots to crows, and so demonstrate the universality of Mr. Chew's appeal; and in regard to the force of presentation, no beholder can fail to perceive the singularly acute hump with which each bird is afflicted.

As with birds, so with dogs. Mr. Chew keeps his methods unalloyed, and works this time with pentagons alone. The title of the picture is "Dignity and Impudence" (No. 7), a title which it will be remembered Sir Edwin Landseer plagiarized from Mr. Chew years before the birth of the younger artist. The impudence of Sir Edwin Landseer is sufficiently illustrated by this disgraceful fact, and the dignity of Mr. Chew is obvious in his drawing. Hence the title, no doubt.

Mr. John Hassall, a convert from older schools, steps into the open as a hopeless Geometrist of the deepest dye, with his arrangement in curvilinear triangles, "The Swallows' Return" (No. 8). The curvilinear triangle, though a form wholly neglected, we believe, by Euclid, is nevertheless capable of much variety of suggestion and expression. Resting on its convex base, it is a wave; inverted, it is a flying swallow; erected on its sharp angle, it is a sail; dropped about on the shore, it is a boulder; and stuck together in a group by Mr. Hassall's art, it builds a lady with a parasol. His admirers are looking for a geometric poster from Mr. Hassall as a final sign of complete conversion.



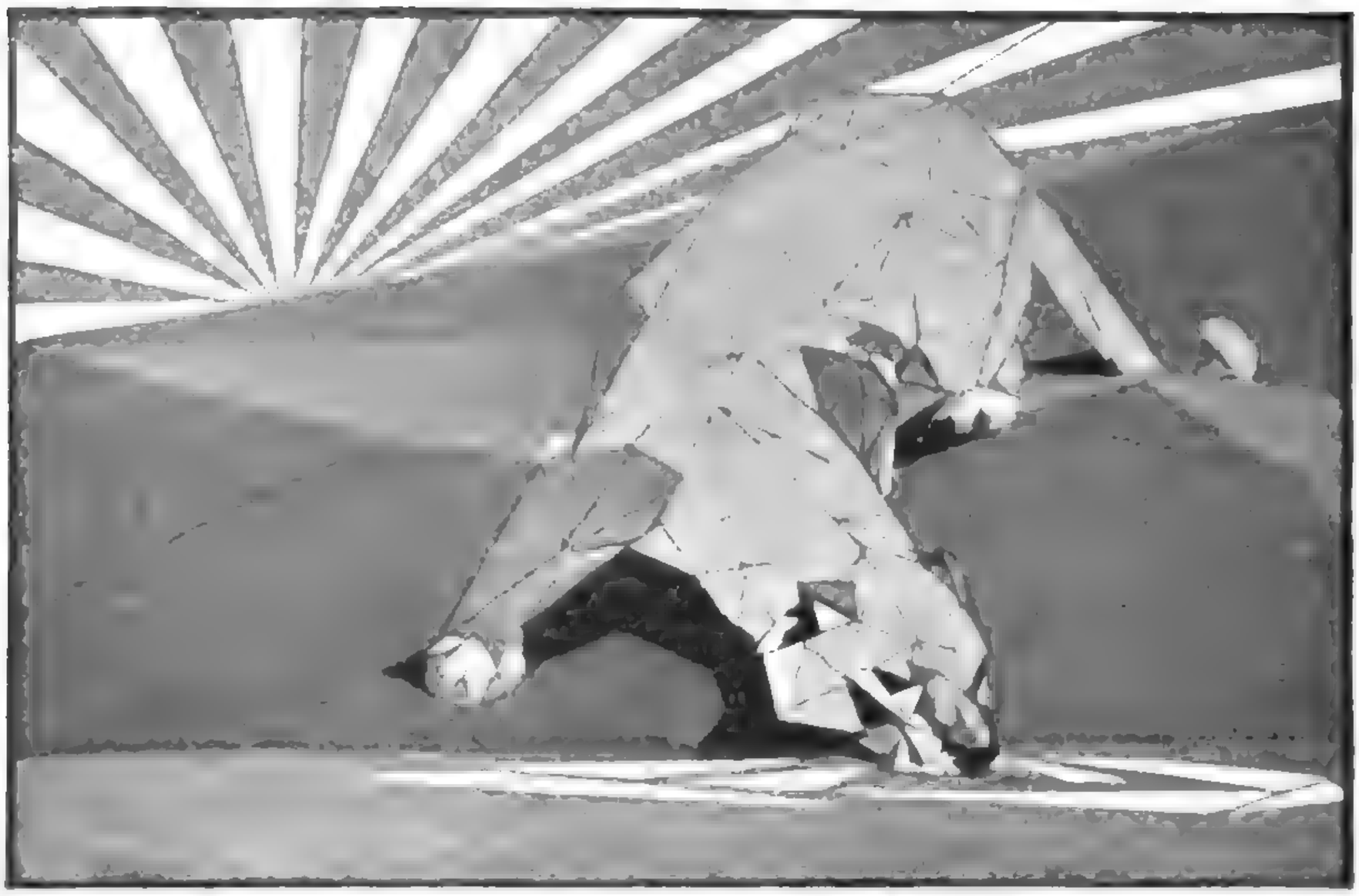
NO. 8.—THE SWALLOWS' RETURN.

(Curvilinear Triangles.)

By JOHN HASSALL.

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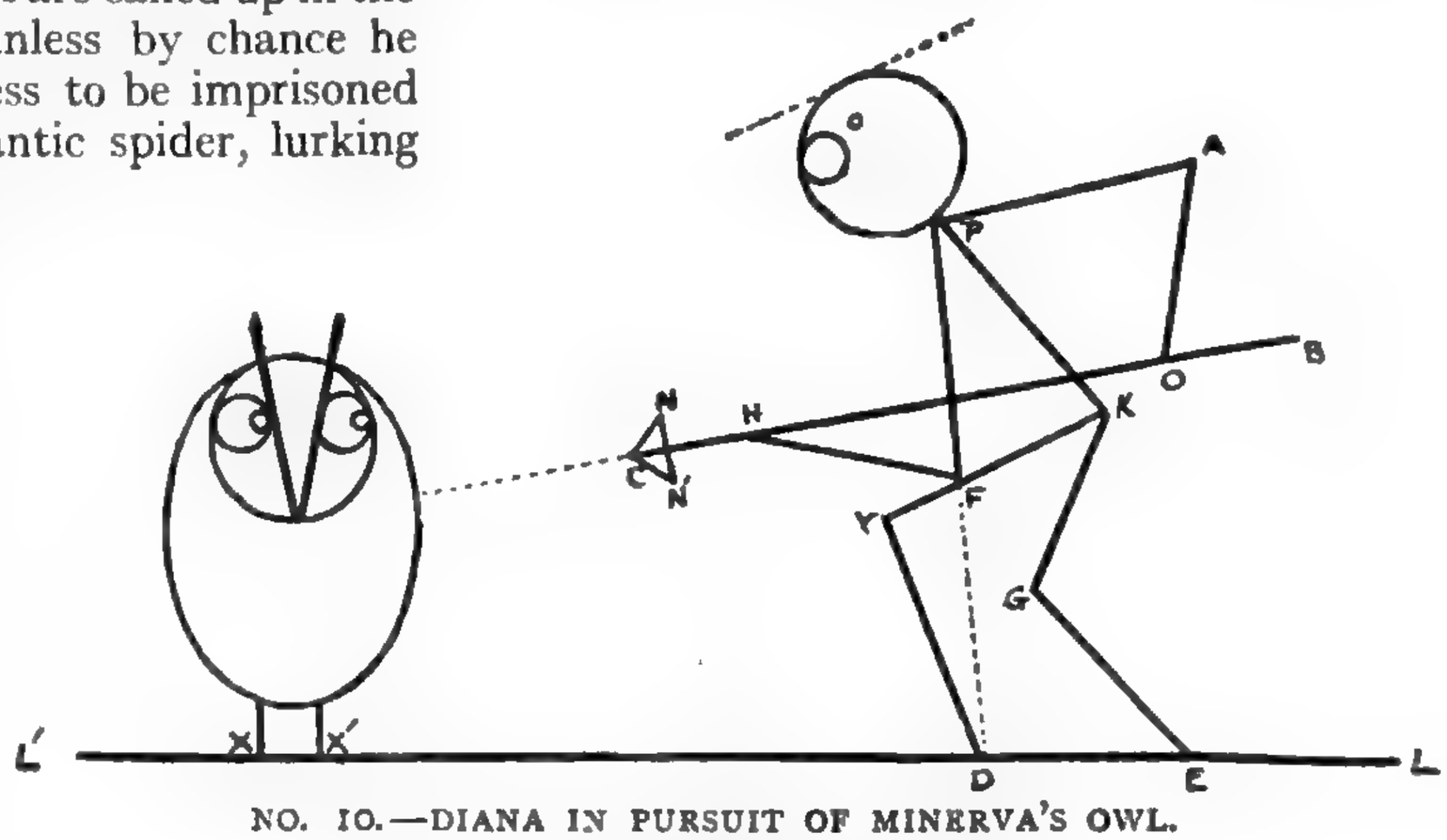
NO. 9.—LIONESS DRINKING: A SCENE AT SUNSET.
(Triangles.)
By HARRY ROUNTREE.

Mr. Harry Rountree does not dash into the new method with an inconsiderate ferocity likely to shock the outsider. He compromises nowhere, as any critic of his "Lioness Drinking" (No. 9) may see for himself. The whole work is executed in triangles, but the artist, so far from resolutely excluding background and accessories, fills them in as completely as any old fogey of yesterday might. But it is all strictly in terms of the triangle, nevertheless; though to mitigate the stark terror of the presentation of a lioness in all the force and fury of geometry, the triangles about the quadruped are so subtly disposed as rather to suggest a lioness of barley-sugar—for an advertisement of which product the masterpiece might be confidently recommended. Thus pleasant associations are called up in the mind of the spectator—unless by chance he should consider the lioness to be imprisoned in the web of some gigantic spider, lurking beyond the horizon in company with the setting sun, and awaiting the proper moment to spring on its helpless victim. On the whole, this seems as likely an interpretation as the barley-sugar, and much more dramatic.

Mr. René Bull has acquired the Geometrist virus in so extreme a form as to threaten the distinction of a separate classification as an unmitigated Euclidian. Nothing can explain Mr. René Bull's theories so well as the burning words of the eloquent artist himself. Mr. Bull writes:—

"Let it be granted that a body can be described by straight lines. Then HFPAOKYDGE is the body. Describe a circle to impinge upon the angle APF so that KP, if produced, will form its diameter. Within this circle describe another, and let it be granted that together they form a head. Join HO and produce either way to B and C. At C describe a spear-head CNN¹. Now, if P, A, F, H be movable and adjustable joints, then BC can be produced to meet a figure described on XX¹ by means of five circles, two straight lines, and an ellipse, purporting to be a bird of wisdom. If K, Y, G be also movable and adjustable joints, then if DE be advanced along the plane LL¹, the figure will move, and a life-like cinematograph picture will be seen, entitled 'Diana in Pursuit of Minerva's Owl' (No. 10). All of which is absurd."

The clearest part of this demonstration would seem to be the last sentence, with which we cordially agree.



NO. 10.—DIANA IN PURSUIT OF MINERVA'S OWL.
(Circles, Straight Lines, and an Ellipse.)
By RENÉ BULL.

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Doing Clarence a Bit of Good.

By P. G. WODEHOUSE.

Illustrated by Charles Crombie.

HAVE you ever thought about—and, when I say thought about, I mean really carefully considered the question of—the coolness, the cheek, or, if you prefer it, the gall with which Woman, as a sex, fairly bursts? *I* have, by Jove! But then I've had it thrust on my notice, by George, in a way I should imagine has happened to pretty few fellows. And the limit was reached by that business of the Yeardsley "Venus."

To make you understand the full what-d'you-call-it of the situation, I shall have to explain just how matters stood between Mrs. Yeardsley and myself.

When I first knew her she was Elizabeth Shoolbred. Old Worcestershire family; pots of money; pretty as a picture. Her brother Bill was at Oxford with me. My name's Reggie Pepper, by the way.

I loved Elizabeth Shoolbred. I loved her, don't you know. And there was a time, for about a week, when we were engaged to be married. But just as I was beginning to take a serious view of life and study furniture catalogues and feel pretty solemn when the restaurant orchestra played "The Wedding Glide," I'm hanged if she didn't break it off, and a month later she was married to a fellow of the name of Yeardsley—Clarence Yeardsley, an artist.

What with golf, and billiards, and a bit of racing, and fellows at the club rallying round and kind of taking me out of myself, as it were, I got over it, and came to look on the affair as a closed page in the book of my life, if you know what I mean. It didn't seem likely to me that we should meet again, as she and Clarence had settled down in the country somewhere and never came to London, and I'm bound to own that, by the time I got her letter, the wound had pretty well healed, and I was to a certain extent sitting up and taking nourishment. In fact, to be absolutely honest, I was jolly thankful the thing had ended as it had done.

This letter I'm telling you about arrived one morning out of a blue sky, as it were. It ran like this:—

"MY DEAR OLD REGGIE,—What ages it seems since I saw anything of you. How are you? We have settled down here in the most perfect old house, with a lovely garden, in the middle of delightful country. Couldn't you run down here for a few days? Clarence and I would be so glad to see you. Bill is here, and is most anxious to meet you again. He was speaking of you only this morning. *Do* come. Wire your train, and I will send the car to meet you.—Yours most sincerely, ELIZABETH YEARDSLEY.

"P.S.—We can give you new milk and fresh eggs. Think of that!

"P.P.S.—Bill says our billiard-table is one of the best he has ever played on.

"P.P.S.S.—We are only half a mile from a golf course. Bill says it is better than St. Andrews.

"P.P.S.S.S.—You *must* come!"

Well, a fellow comes down to breakfast one morning, with a bit of a head on, and finds a letter like that from a girl who might quite easily have blighted his life! It rattled me rather, I must confess.

However, that bit about the golf settled me. I knew Bill knew what he was talking about, and, if he said the course was so topping, it must be something special. So I went.

Old Bill met me at the station with the car. I hadn't come across him for some months, and I was glad to see him again. And he apparently was glad to see me.

"Thank goodness you've come," he said, as we drove off. "I was just about at my last gasp."

"What's the trouble, old scout?" I asked.

"If I had the artistic what's-its-name," he went on, "if the mere mention of pictures didn't give me the pip, I daresay it wouldn't be so bad. As it is, it's rotten!"

"Pictures?"

"Pictures. Nothing else is mentioned in this household. Clarence is an artist. So is his father. And you know yourself what Elizabeth is like when one gives her her head?"

I remembered then—it hadn't come back

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to me before—that most of my time with Elizabeth had been spent in picture-galleries. During the period when I had let her do just what she wanted to do with me, I had had to follow her like a dog through gallery after gallery, though pictures are poison to me, just as they are to old Bill. Somehow it had never struck me that she would still be going on in this way after marrying an artist. I should have thought that by this time the mere sight of a picture would have fed her up. Not so, however, according to old Bill.

"They talk pictures at every meal," he said. "I tell you, it makes a chap feel out of it. How long are you down for?"

"A few days."

"Take my tip, and let me send you a wire from London. I go there to-morrow. I promised to play against the Scottish. The idea was that I was to come back after the match. But you couldn't get me back with a lasso."

I tried to point out the silver lining.

"But, Bill, old scout, your sister says there's a most corking links near here."

He turned and stared at me, and nearly ran us into the bank.

"You don't mean honestly she said that?"

"She said you said it was better than St. Andrews."

"So I did. Was that all she said I said?"

"Well, wasn't it enough?"

"She didn't happen to mention that I added the words, 'I don't think'?"

"No, she forgot to tell me that."

"It's the worst course in Great Britain."

I felt rather stunned, don't you know. Whether it's a bad habit to have got into or not, I can't say, but I simply can't do without my daily allowance of golf when I'm not in London.

I took another whirl at the silver lining.

"We'll have to take it out in billiards," I said. "I'm glad the table's good."

"It depends what you call good. It's half-size, and there's a seven-inch cut just out of baulk where Clarence's cue slipped. Elizabeth has mended it with pink silk. Very smart and dressy it looks, but it doesn't improve the thing as a billiard-table."

"But she said you said——"

"Must have been pulling your leg."

We turned in at the drive gates of a good-sized house standing well back from the road. It looked black and sinister in the dusk, and I couldn't help feeling, you know, like one of those Johnnies you read about in stories who are lured to lonely houses for rummy purposes and hear a shriek just as they get there. Elizabeth knew me well enough to know that a specially good golf course was a safe draw to me. Not to mention the billiard-table. And she had deliberately played on her knowledge. What was the game? That was what I wanted to know. And then a sudden thought struck me which brought me out in a cold perspiration. She had some girl down here and was going to have a stab at marrying me off. I've often heard that young married women are all over that sort of thing. Certainly she had said there was nobody at the house but Clarence and herself and Bill and Clarence's father, but a woman who could take the name of St. Andrews in vain as she had done wouldn't be likely to stick at a trifle.

"Bill, old scout," I said, "there aren't any frightful girls or any rot of that sort stopping here, are there?"

"Wish there were," he said. "No such luck."

As we pulled up at the front door, it opened, and a woman's figure appeared.

"Have you got him, Bill?" she said, which in my present frame of mind struck me as a jolly creepy way of putting it. The sort of thing Lady Macbeth might have said to Macbeth, don't you know.

"Do you mean me?" I said.

She came down into the light. It was Elizabeth, looking just the same as in the old days.

"Is that you, Reggie? I'm so glad you were able to come. I was afraid you might have forgotten all about it. You know what you are. Come along in and have some tea."

Have you ever been turned down by a girl who afterwards married and then been introduced to her husband? If so, you'll understand how I felt when Clarence burst on me. You know the feeling. First of all, when you hear about the marriage, you say to yourself, "I wonder what he's like." Then you meet him, and think, "There must be some mistake. She can't have preferred *this* to me!" That's what I thought when I set eyes on Clarence.

He was a little, thin, nervous-looking chappy of about thirty-five. His hair was getting grey at the temples and straggly on top. He wore pince-nez, and he had a drooping moustache. I'm no Bombardier Wells myself, but in front of Clarence I felt quite a nut. And Elizabeth, mind you, is one of those tall, splendid girls who look like

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princesses. Honestly, I believe women do it out of pure cussedness.

"How do you do, Mr. Pepper? Hark! Can you hear a mewing cat?" said Clarence. All in one breath, don't you know.

"Eh?" I said.

"A mewing cat. I feel sure I hear a mewing cat. Listen!"

While we were listening the door opened, and a white-haired old gentleman came in. He was built on the same lines as Clarence, but was an earlier model. I took him, correctly, to be Mr. Yeardsley, senior. Elizabeth introduced us.

"Father," said Clarence, "did you meet a mewing cat outside? I feel positive I heard a cat mewing."

"No," said the father, shaking his head; "no mewing cat."

"I can't bear mewing cats," said Clarence. "A mewing cat gets on my nerves!"

"A mewing cat is so trying," said Elizabeth.

"*I* dislike mewing cats," said old Mr. Yeardsley.

That was all about mewing cats for the moment. They seemed to think they had covered the ground satisfactorily, and they went back to pictures.

We talked pictures steadily till it was time to dress for dinner. At least, they did. I just sort of sat around. Presently the subject of picture-robberies came up. Somebody mentioned the "Monna Lisa," and then I happened to remember seeing something in the evening paper, as I was coming down in the train, about some fellow somewhere having had a valuable painting pinched by burglars the night before. It was the first time I had had a chance of breaking into the conversation with any effect, and I meant to make the most of it. The paper was in the pocket of my overcoat in the hall. I went and fetched it.

"Here it is," I said. "A Romney belonging to Sir Bellamy Palmer——"

They all shouted "What!" exactly at the same time, like a chorus. Elizabeth grabbed the paper.

"Let me look! Yes. 'Late last night burglars entered the residence of Sir Bellamy Palmer, Dryden Park, Midford, Hants——'"

"Why, that's near here," I said. "I passed through Midford——"

"Dryden Park is only two miles from this house," said Elizabeth. I noticed her eyes were sparkling.

"Only two miles!" she said. "It might have been us! It might have been the 'Venus'!"

Old Mr. Yeardsley bounded in his chair.

"The 'Venus'!" he cried.

They all seemed wonderfully excited. My little contribution to the evening's chat had made quite a hit.

Why I didn't notice it before I don't know, but it was not till Elizabeth showed it to me after dinner that I had my first look at the Yeardsley "Venus." When she led me up to it, and switched on the light, it seemed impossible that I could have sat right through dinner without noticing it. But then, at meals, my attention is pretty well riveted on the food-stuffs. Anyway, it was not till Elizabeth showed it to me that I was aware of its existence.

She and I were alone in the drawing-room after dinner. Old Yeardsley was writing letters in the morning-room, while Bill and Clarence were rollicking on the half-size billiard-table with the pink silk tapestry effects. All, in fact, was joy, jollity, and song, so to speak, when Elizabeth, who had been sitting wrapped in thought for a bit, bent towards me and said, "Reggie."

And the moment she said it I knew something was going to happen. You know that pre-what-d'you-call-it you get sometimes? Well, I got it then.

"What o?" I said, nervously.

"Reggie," she said, "I want to ask a great favour of you."

"Yes?"

She stooped down and put a log on the fire, and went on, with her back to me:—

"Do you remember, Reggie, once saying you would do anything in the world for me?"

There! That's what I meant when I said that about the cheek of Woman as a sex. What I mean is, after what had happened, you'd have thought she would have preferred to let the dead past bury its dead, and all that sort of thing, what?

Mind you, I *had* said I would do anything in the world for her. I admit that. But it was a distinctly pre-Clarence remark. He hadn't appeared on the scene then, and it stands to reason that a fellow who may have been a perfect knight-errant to a girl when he was engaged to her doesn't feel nearly so keen on spreading himself in that direction when she has given him the miss-in-baulk and gone and married a man who reason and instinct both tell him is a decided blighter.

I couldn't think of anything to say but "Oh, yes."

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"There's something you can do for me now, which will make me everlastingly grateful."

"Yes?" I said.

"Do you know, Reggie," she said, suddenly, "that only a few months ago Clarence was very fond of cats?"

"Eh! Well, he still seems—er—*interested* in them, what?"

"Now they get on his nerves. Everything gets on his nerves."

"Some fellows swear by that stuff you see advertised all over the——"

"No, that wouldn't help him. He doesn't need to take anything. He wants to get rid of something."

"I don't quite follow. Get rid of something?"

"The 'Venus,'" said Elizabeth.

She looked up and caught my bulging eye.

"You saw the 'Venus,'" she said.

"Not that I remember."

"Well, come into the dining-room."

We went into the dining-room, and she switched on the lights.

"There," she said.

On the wall close to the door—that may have been why I hadn't noticed it before; I had sat with my back to it—was a large oil-painting. It was what you'd call a classical picture, I suppose. What I mean is—well, you know what I mean. All I can say is that it's funny I *hadn't* noticed it.

"Is that the 'Venus'?" I said.

She nodded.

"How would you like to have to look at that every time you sat down to a meal?"

"Well, I don't know. I don't think it would affect me much. I'd worry through all right."

She jerked her head impatiently.

"But you're not an artist," she said. "Clarence is."

And then I began to see daylight. What exactly was the trouble I didn't understand, but it was evidently something to do with the good old Artistic Temperament, and I could believe anything about that. It explains everything. It's like the Unwritten Law, don't you know, which you plead in America if you've done anything they want to send you to chokey for and you don't want to go. What I mean is, if you're absolutely off your rocker, but don't find it convenient to be scooped into the luny-bin, you simply explain that, when you said you were a tea-pot, it was just your Artistic Temperament, and



"I HAD MY FIRST LOOK AT THE YEARDSLEY 'VENUS.'"

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they apologize and go away. So I stood by to hear just how the A. T. had affected Clarence, the Cat's Friend, ready for anything.

And, believe me, it had hit Clarence badly.

It was this way. It seemed that old Yeardsley was an amateur artist and that this "Venus" was his masterpiece. He said so, and he ought to have known. Well, when Clarence married, he had given it to him as a wedding-present, and had hung it where it stood with his own hands. All right so far, what? But mark the sequel. Temperamental Clarence, being a professional artist and consequently some streets ahead of the dad at the game, saw flaws in the "Venus." He couldn't stand it at any price. He didn't like the drawing. He didn't like the expression of the face. He didn't like the colouring. In fact, it made him feel quite ill to look at it. Yet, being devoted to his father and wanting to do anything rather than give him pain, he had not been able to bring himself to store the thing in the cellar, and the strain of confronting the picture three times a day had begun to tell on him to such an extent that Elizabeth felt something had to be done.

"Now you see," she said.

"In a way," I said. "But don't you think it's making rather heavy weather over a trifle?"

"Oh, can't you understand? Look!" Her voice dropped as if she was in church, and she switched on another light. It shone on the picture next to old Yeardsley's. "*There!*" she said. "Clarence painted *that!*"

She looked at me expectantly, as if she were waiting for me to swoon, or yell, or something. I took a steady look at Clarence's effort. It was another Classical picture. It seemed to me very much like the other one.

Some sort of art criticism was evidently expected of me, so I made a dash at it.

"Er—'Venus'?" I said.

Mark you, Sherlock Holmes would have made the same mistake. On the evidence, I mean.

"No. 'Jocund Spring,'" she snapped. She switched off the light. "I see you don't understand even now. You never had any taste about pictures. When we used to go to the galleries together, you would far rather have been at your club."

This was so absolutely true that I had no remark to make. She came up to me, and put her hand on my arm.

"I'm sorry, Reggie. I didn't mean to be cross. Only I do want to make you understand that Clarence is *suffering*. Suppose—suppose—well, let us take the case of a great musician. Suppose a great musician had to sit and listen to a cheap, vulgar tune—the same tune—day after day, day after day, wouldn't you expect his nerves to break? Well, it's just like that with Clarence. Now do you see?"

"Yes, but——"

"But what? Surely I've put it plainly enough?"

"Yes. But what I mean is, where do I come in? What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to steal the 'Venus.'"

I looked at her.

"You want me to——?"

"Steal it. Reggie!" Her eyes were shining with excitement. "Don't you see? It's Providence. When I asked you to come here, I had just got the idea. I knew I could rely on you. And then by a miracle this robbery of the Romney takes place at a house not two miles away. It removes the last chance of the poor old man suspecting anything and having his feelings hurt. Why, it's the most wonderful compliment to him. Think! One night thieves steal a splendid Romney; the next the same gang take his 'Venus.' It will be the proudest moment of his life. Do it to-night, Reggie. I'll give you a sharp knife. You simply cut the canvas out of the frame, and it's done."

"But one moment," I said. "I'd be delighted to be of any use to you, but in a purely family affair like this, wouldn't it be better—in fact, how about tackling old Bill on the subject?"

"I have asked Bill already. Yesterday. He refused."

"But if I'm caught?"

"You can't be. All you have to do is to take the picture, open one of the windows, leave it open, and go back to your room."

It sounded simple enough.

"And as to the picture itself—when I've got it?"

"Burn it. I'll see that you have a good fire in your room."

"But——"

She looked at me. She always did have the most wonderful eyes.

"Reggie," she said; nothing more. Just "Reggie."

She looked at me.

Well, after all, if you see what I mean—— The days that are no more, don't you know. Auld Lang Syne, and all that sort of thing. You follow me?

"All right," I said. "I'll do it."

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"I LIT THE LANTERN I HAD TAKEN FROM BILL'S BICYCLE, TOOK A GRIP OF MY KNIFE, AND SLUNK DOWNSTAIRS."

I don't know if you happen to be one of those Johnnies who are steeped in crime, and so forth, and think nothing of pinching diamond necklaces. If you're not, you'll understand that I felt a lot less keen on the job I'd taken on when I sat in my room, waiting to get busy, than I had done when I promised to tackle it in the dining-room. On paper it all seemed easy enough, but I couldn't help feeling there was a catch somewhere, and I've never known time pass slower. The kick-off was scheduled for one o'clock in the morning, when the household might be expected to be pretty sound asleep, but at a quarter to I couldn't stand it any longer. I lit the lantern I had taken from Bill's bicycle, took a grip of my knife, and slunk downstairs.

The first thing I did on getting to the dining-room was to open the window. I had half a mind to smash it, so as to give an extra bit of local colour to the affair, but decided not to on account of the noise. I had put my lantern on the table, and was just reaching out for it, when something happened. What it was for the moment I couldn't have said. It might have been an explosion of some sort or an earthquake. Some solid object caught me a frightful whack on the chin. Sparks and things occurred inside my head, and the next thing I remember is feeling something wet and cold splash into my face, and hearing a voice that sounded like old Bill's say, "Feeling better now?"

I sat up. The lights were on, and I was

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on the floor, with old Bill kneeling beside me with a soda siphon.

"What happened?" I said.

"I'm awfully sorry, old man," he said. "I hadn't a notion it was you. I came in here, and saw a lantern on the table and the window open and a chap with a knife in his hand, so I didn't stop to make inquiries. I just let go at his jaw for all I was worth. What on earth do you think you're doing? Were you walking in your sleep?"

"It was Elizabeth," I said. "Why, you know all about it. She said she had told you."

"You don't mean——"

"The picture. You refused to take it on, so she asked me."

"Reggie, old man," he said, "I'll never believe what they say about repentance again. It's a fool's trick and upsets everything. If I hadn't repented, and thought it was rather rough on Elizabeth not to do a little thing like that for her, and come down here to do it after all, you wouldn't have stopped that sleep-producer with your chin. I'm sorry."

"Me, too," I said, giving my head another shake to make certain it was still on.

"Are you feeling better now?"

"Better than I was. But that's not saying much."

"Would you like some more soda-water? No? Well, how about getting this job finished and going to bed? And let's be quick about it too. You made a noise like a ton of bricks when you went down just now, and it's on the cards some of the servants may have heard. Toss you who carves."

"Heads."

"Tails it is," he said, uncovering the coin. "Up you get. I'll hold the light. Don't spike yourself on that sword of yours."

It was as easy a job as Elizabeth had said. Just four quick cuts, and the thing came out of its frame like an oyster. I rolled it up. Old Bill had put the lantern on the floor and was at the sideboard, collecting whisky, soda, and glasses.



"THE NEXT THING I REMEMBER IS FEELING SOMETHING COLD SPLASH INTO MY FACE, AND HEARING OLD BILL SAY, 'FEELING BETTER NOW?'"

"We've got a long evening before us," he said. "You can't burn a picture of that size in one chunk. You'd set the chimney on fire. Let's do the thing comfortably. Clarence can't grudge us the stuff. We've done him a bit of good this trip. To-morrow'll be the maddest, merriest day of Clarence's glad New Year. On we go."

We went up to my room, and sat smoking and yarning away and sipping our drinks, and every now and then cutting a slice off

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the picture and shoving it in the fire till it was all gone. And what with the cosiness of it, and the cheerful blaze, and the comfortable feeling of doing good by stealth, I don't know when I've had a jollier time since the days when we used to brew in my study at school.

We had just put the last slice on when Bill sat up suddenly, and gripped my arm.

"I heard something," he said.

I listened, and, by Jove, I heard something, too. My room was just over the dining-room, and the sound came up to us quite distinctly. Stealthy footsteps, by George! And then a chair falling over.

"There's somebody in the dining-room," I whispered.

There's a certain type of chap who takes a pleasure in positively chivvying trouble. Old Bill's like that. If I had been alone, it would have taken me about three seconds to persuade myself that I hadn't really heard anything after all. I'm a peaceful sort of cove, and believe in living and letting live, and so forth. To old Bill, however, a visit from burglars was pure jam. He was out of his chair in one jump.

"Come on," he said. "Bring the poker."

I brought the tongs as well. I felt like it. Old Bill collared the knife. We crept downstairs.

"We'll fling the door open and make a rush," said Bill.

"Supposing they shoot, old scout?"

"Burglars never shoot," said Bill.

Which was comforting provided the burglars knew it.

Old Bill took a grip of the handle, turned it quickly, and in he went. And then we pulled up sharp, staring.

The room was in darkness except for a feeble splash of light at the near end. Standing on a chair in front of Clarence's "Jocund Spring," holding a candle in one hand and reaching up with a knife in the other, was old Mr. Yeardsley, in bedroom slippers and a grey dressing-gown. He had made a final cut just as we rushed in. Turning at the sound, he stopped, and he and the chair and the candle and the picture came down in a heap together. The candle went out.

"What on earth?" said Bill.

I felt the same. I picked up the candle and lit it, and then a most fearful thing happened. The old man picked himself up, and suddenly collapsed into a chair and began to cry like a child. Of course, I could see it was only the Artistic Temperament, but still, believe me, it was devilish unpleasant. I looked at old Bill. Old Bill looked at me. We shut the door quick, and after that we didn't know what to do. I saw Bill look at the sideboard, and I knew what he was looking for. But we had taken the siphon upstairs, and his ideas of first aid stopped short at squirting soda-water. We just waited, and presently old Yeardsley switched off, sat up, and began talking with a rush.

"Clarence, my boy, I was tempted. It was that burglary at Dryden Park. It tempted me. It made it all so simple. I knew you would put it down to the same gang, Clarence, my boy. I——"

It seemed to dawn upon him at this point that Clarence was not among those present.

"Clarence?" he said, hesitatingly.

"He's in bed," I said.

"In bed! Then he doesn't know? Even now—— Young men, I throw myself on your mercy. Don't be hard on me. Listen." He grabbed at Bill, who side-stepped. "I can explain everything—everything."

He gave a gulp.

"You are not artists, you two young men, but I will try to make you understand, make you realize what this picture means to me. I was two years painting it. It is my child. I watched it grow. I loved it. It was part of my life. Nothing would have induced me to sell it. And then Clarence married, and in a mad moment I gave my treasure to him. You cannot understand, you two young men, what agonies I suffered. The thing was done. It was irrevocable. I saw how Clarence valued the picture. I knew that I could never bring myself to ask him for it back. And yet I was lost without it. What could I do? Till this evening I could see no hope. Then came this story of the theft of the Romney from a house quite close to this, and I saw my way. Clarence would never suspect. He would put the robbery down to the same band of criminals who stole the Romney. Once the idea had come, I could not drive it out. I fought against it, but to no avail. At last I yielded, and crept down here to carry out my plan. You found me." He grabbed again, at me this time, and got me by the arm. He had a grip like a lobster. "Young man," he said, "you would not betray me? You would not tell Clarence?"

I was feeling most frightfully sorry for the poor old chap by this time, don't you know, but I thought it would be kindest to give it him straight instead of breaking it by degrees.

"I won't say a word to Clarence, Mr. Yeardsley," I said. "I quite understand your feelings. The Artistic Temperament, and

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"HOLDING A CANDLE IN ONE HAND, AND REACHING UP WITH A KNIFE IN THE OTHER, WAS OLD MR. YEARDSLEY."

all that sort of thing, I mean—what? *I* know. But I'm afraid—— Well, look!"

I went to the door and switched on the electric light, and there, staring him in the face, were the two empty frames. He stood goggling at them in silence. Then he gave a sort of wheezy grunt.

"The gang! The burglars! They *have* been here, and they have taken Clarence's picture!" He paused. "It might have been mine! My Venus!" he whispered.

It was getting most fearfully painful, you know, but he had to know the truth.

"I'm awfully sorry, you know," I said. "But it *was*."

He started, poor old chap.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"They *did* take your Venus."

"But I have it here."

I shook my head.

"That's Clarence's 'Jocund Spring,'" I said.

He jumped at it and straightened it out.

"What! What are you talking about? Do you think I don't know my own picture —my child— my Venus? See! My own signature in the corner. Can you read, boy? Look: 'Matthew Yeardsley.' This is *my* picture!"

And—well, by Jove! it *was*, don't you know.

Well, we got him off to bed, him and his infernal Venus, and we settled down to take a steady look at the position of affairs. Bill said it was my fault for getting hold of the wrong picture, and I said it was Bill's fault for fetching me such a crack on the jaw that I couldn't be expected to see what I was getting hold of, and then there was a pretty massive silence for a bit.

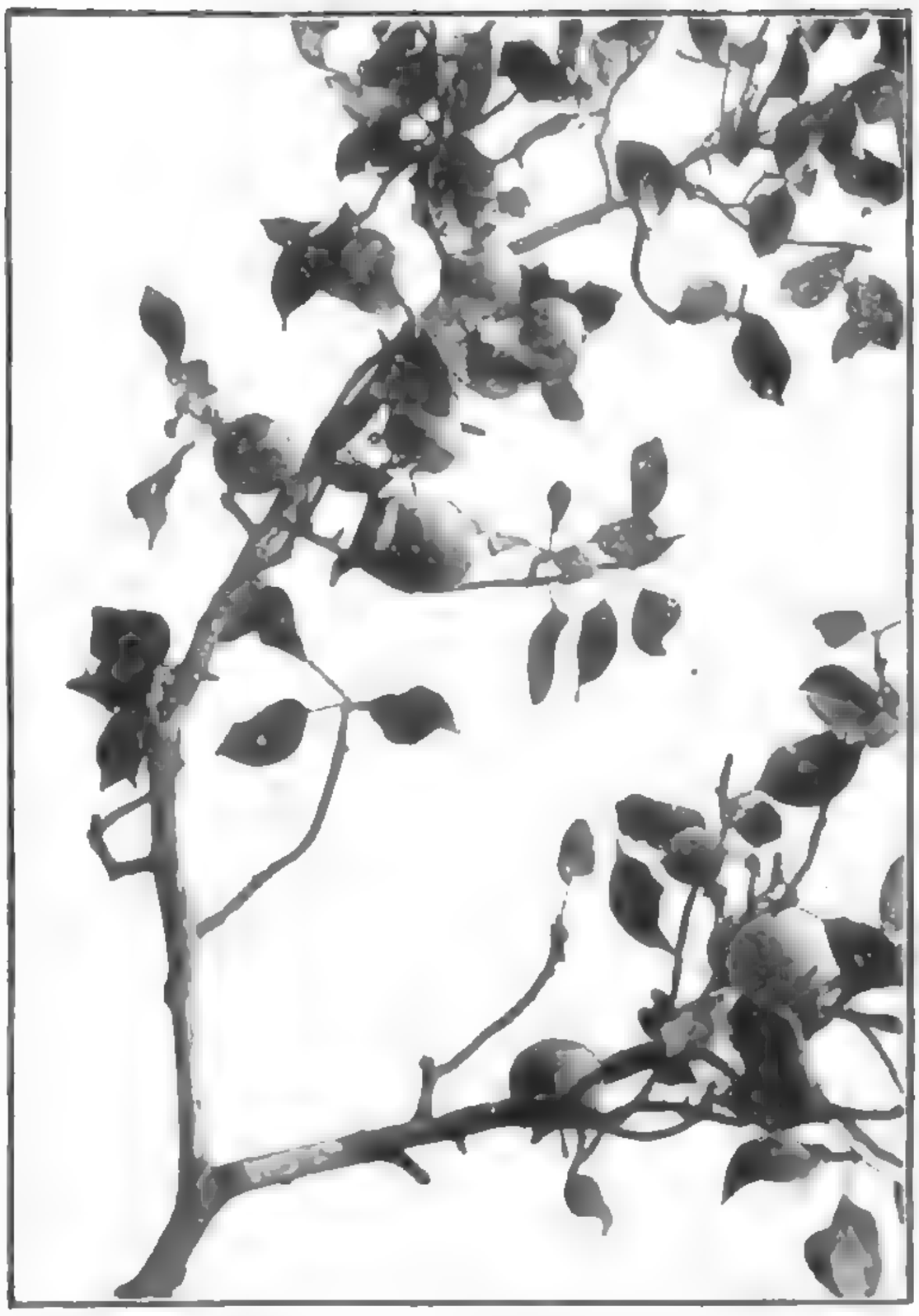
"Reggie," said Bill, at last, "how exactly do you feel about facing Clarence and Elizabeth at breakfast?"

"Old scout," I said, "I was thinking much the same myself."

"Reggie," said Bill, "I happen to know there's a milk-train leaving Midford at three-fifteen. It isn't what you'd call a flier. It gets to London at about half-past nine. Well — er — in the circumstances, how about it?"

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TO SECURE THE EARLY RIPENING OF APPLES CUT AWAY THE BARK FROM THE STEM AS SHOWN ABOVE.

Some Gardening Experiments.

By
S. LEONARD BASTIN.

Illustrations from Photographs by the Author.

AT a time when Britain is in a fair way to become a nation of gardeners, it may be of interest to introduce to the readers of THE STRAND a few novelties in which the amateur grower may engage.

The early ripening of fruit is often much to be desired. With apples, pears, plums, and similar kinds this is not a difficult matter. All that is necessary is to select a branch on which the fruit is well set. On the lower part of the bough cut a ring entirely round the stem. By this means the return flow of the sap to the lower parts of the tree is in a measure prevented and the branch as a whole will be much enriched. It will be found that the fruit on this part will be remarkably fine, and, moreover, will be ripe many weeks before the usual time. No harm will result to the tree if at the next season, when the bark descends to cover up the space, the union of the two parts is assisted by the cutting of the edges clean at the point of junction.



GOOSEBERRIES WILL SWELL TO AN ENORMOUS SIZE IF THEIR TIPS ARE ALLOWED TO DIP INTO WATER.

In connection with fruit-growing one may introduce a very novel plan of securing big gooseberries. Of course, this fruit contains an immense amount of water, and it is possible to bring about a very large increase in the quantity of the juice. Secure a number of tin-lids and place these round the bush, supporting them with bricks or inverted pots. Each little pan is to be filled with water, and the gooseberry branches pulled over so that the tips of the fruit just touch the liquid. The pans are kept regularly supplied with clean

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water, and the grower will be astonished at the rapidity with which the gooseberries drink up the moisture. Very soon they will reach a monstrous size, which may well be two or three times that of the fruit grown in the usual manner.

For those gardeners who are fond of curiosities, there is perhaps nothing more singular than fruit photography. For this there is no subject so good as the apple. It is only necessary to prepare some paper stencils which anyone may cut out, according to his own fancy. These should be made of fairly thin paper, and may take the form of a portrait, a coat-of-arms, or other figure. The fruits which it is desired to treat should be as perfect as possible. When they are nearly mature — but before they have turned colour in any way — they should be enclosed in paper bags. Directly the apple has attained to its full size the stencil must be stuck with pure starch paste upon the cheek of the apple which will get the greatest amount of sun. The skin of the apple should have become fully red before the stencil is removed, when, if all has gone well, it will be seen that there is a very clear imprint standing up against a reddish background. If the stencil should have been washed off by rain it may be possible to replace it, at any rate during the early stages of the progress.



PRINTING PICTURES ON APPLES BY MEANS OF PAPER STENCILS IS A SIMPLE OPERATION.



HOW TWO HYACINTH BULBS MAY BE GROWN TOGETHER TO PRODUCE UNUSUAL COLOUR EFFECTS.

A novel experiment is that of growing two hyacinth bulbs together. Two bulbs are selected which are known to flower about the same time, although in other respects the more diverse they are the better. Each is cut from the crown to the base with a sharp knife in such a way that the central shoot is exposed but not injured. The two larger portions of the bulbs are then tied together, the cut portions facing one another. The double bulb is then potted, as shown in the accompanying illustration. If all has gone well, a single stem comes up, while the flower may be blue on one side and pink on the other, according to the colours of the bulbs. The result is highly mystifying to gardeners who are not "in the know." The experiment is often carried out by the Dutch growers, and rarely fails, if carefully executed.



A STANDARD VIOLET IS A NOVELTY WHICH IS NOT REALLY DIFFICULT TO PRODUCE.

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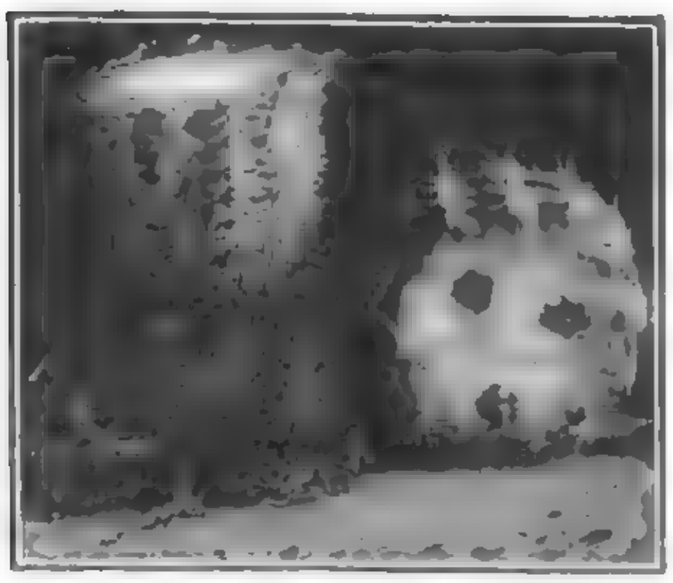
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While on the subject of bulbs, it may interest those who like novelties to point out that the roots of the autumn crocus, if placed on a warm mantelshelf, will produce abundance of flowers without any soil or water whatever. The time of year for purchasing the bulbs for this treatment is about August.



IF THE STEMS OF LILIES-OF-THE-VALLEY ARE IMMERSED FOR ABOUT AN HOUR IN RED INK, THE BELLS ASSUME A DELICATE PINK SHADE.

Some gardeners are very fond of training their plants into all sorts of designs. A standard violet is a novelty which is not really difficult to produce. Violet plants should be secured and potted in the usual manner. One runner from each plant should be selected and all side shoots of any description pinched away. The runner is trained up to a support, and if only the top bud is allowed to develop this will presently break into an abundance of flower and foliage, as shown in the photograph on the previous page.





CACTUS GRAFTING PRODUCES SOME VERY CURIOUS RESULTS.

There are many interesting possibilities in cactus grafting. These strange plants are curiously tolerant of cutting, and can be fashioned into all sorts of weird shapes. The annexed illustrations show a singular cactus graft, which has been produced in the following manner: The three uprights are formed of rooted portions of Pereskia, a species of cactus which is usually employed as the stock of the graft, whilst the upper portion is a piece cut from the Sea Urchin cactus. The union between the two plants is quite complete, and it is very likely that this weird specimen will flower. Any florist will supply the rooted Pereskia stocks for grafting, whilst all kinds of cacti may be employed for grafting to the stocks. The only essential point to bear in mind is that to effect a proper union there must be newly-cut surfaces facing one another. Until the union is complete, the graft and the stock may be bound together.

Some distinctly interesting experiments are possible in connection with the changing of the colours of flowers. Many kinds of white flowers, such as lilies-of-the-valley, hyacinths, narcissi, and almost any variety with a succulent stem, may be altered in this respect. All that is necessary is to steep the freshly-cut stems in a strong solution of an aniline dye. Red ink is a good form of one of the brightest of these dyes, and an hour or so after placing the stalks in this material the petals of the blooms will have become vividly pink. The well-known green carnations and similar novelties are produced in this manner, the only difference being the colour of the dye.

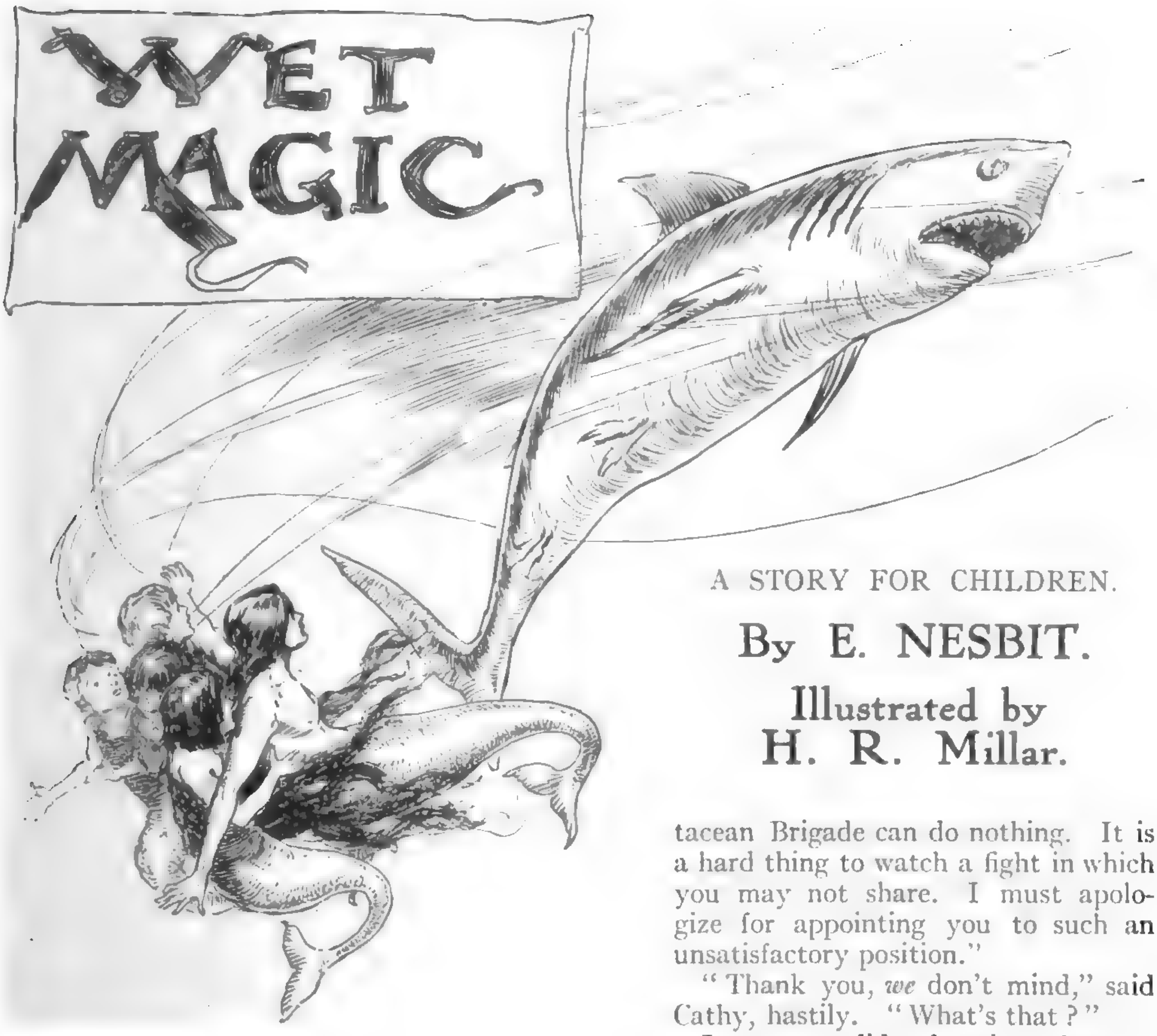
In conclusion, one may offer a method of preserving roses which in years gone by was commonly adopted. Well-developed buds are gathered, and the cut end of the stalk is dipped in liquid wax until it is completely sealed. Each bud is then wrapped in tissue paper and packed away in a well-fitting box. In this state the buds may be left for months, and when it is desired to expand them, cut away the waxed end and place the stem in water which has been slightly warmed.



A METHOD OF PRESERVING ROSES FOR WINTER USE.

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A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

By E. NESBIT.

Illustrated by H. R. Millar.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER the sound of that terrible shouting there came silence—that is, there was silence where the children were, but all above they could hear the rush and rustle of a quick arming.

"The war-cry of the People of the Depths," said the Princess.

"I suppose," said Kathleen, forlornly, "that if they're so near as that all is lost."

"Lost? No, indeed," cried the Princess. "The People of the Depths are very strong, but they are very heavy. They cannot rise up and come to us from the water above. Before they can get in they must scale the wall."

"But they will get over the wall—won't they?"

"Not while one of the Royal Halibuts still lives. The Halibuts have manned the wall; they will keep back the foe. But they won't attack yet. They'll send out their scouts and skirmishers. Till they approach, the Crustacean Brigade can do nothing. It is a hard thing to watch a fight in which you may not share. I must apologize for appointing you to such an unsatisfactory position."

"Thank you, *we* don't mind," said Cathy, hastily. "What's that?"

It was a solid, gleaming sheet of silver that rose above them like a great carpet—which split and tore itself into silver threads.

"It is the Sword-fish Brigade," said the Princess. "We could swim up a little and watch them, if you're not afraid. You see, the first attack will probably be delivered by one of their Shark regiments. The Seventh Sharks have a horrible reputation. But our brave Sword-fish are a match for them," she added, proudly.

The Sword-fish, who were slowly swimming to and fro above, seemed to stiffen as though to meet some danger at present unseen by the others. Then, with a swift, silent, terrible movement, the Sharks rushed on the noble defenders of Merland.

The Sword-fish with their deadly weapons were ready—and next moment all the water was a wild whirl of confused conflict. The Sharks fought with a sort of harsh, rough courage, and the children, who had drawn away to a little distance, could not help admiring their desperate onslaught. But the Sword-fish were more than their match,

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With more skill, and an equally desperate gallantry, they met and repulsed the savage onslaught of the Sharks.

Shoals of large, calm Cod swept up from the depths, and began to shoulder the dead Sharks sideways towards the water above the walls—the dead Sharks and, alas! many a brave, dead Sword-fish, too. For the victory had not been a cheap one.

The children could not help cheering as the victorious Sword-fish re-formed.

"Pursuit is unnecessary," said the Princess. "The Sharks have lost too heavily to resume the attack."

A Shark in terror-stricken retreat passed close by her, and she clipped its tail with her oyster-shell.

The Shark turned savagely, but the Princess with one tailswish was out of danger, pushing the children before her outspread arms, and the Shark began to sink, still making vain efforts to pursue them.

"The shell will drag him down," said the Princess; "and now I must go and get a fresh shield. I wish I knew where the next attack would be delivered."

They sank slowly through the water.

"I wonder where Reuben is?" said Bernard.

"Oh, he's quite safe," said the Princess. "The Boy Scouts don't go outside the walls—they just do a good turn for anybody who wants it, you know—and help the kind Soles to look after the wounded."

They had reached the great flooded garden again and turned towards the Palace, and as they went a Sea-urchin shell suddenly rose from behind one of the clipped hedges—a Sea-urchin's shell and behind it a long tail.

The shell was raised, and the face under it was Reuben's.

"Hi, Princess!" he shouted. "I've been looking for you everywhere. We've been scouting. I got a lot of seaweed, and they thought I was nothing *but* seaweed; and so I got quite close to the enemy."

"It was very rash," said the Princess, severely.

"The others don't think so," he said, a little hurt. "They began by saying I was only an irregular Sea-urchin, because I've got this jolly tail"—he gave it a merry wag—"and they called me Spatangus, and names like that. But they've made me their General now—General Echinus. I'm a regular now, and no mistake, and what I was going to say is the enemy is going to attack the North Tower in force in half an hour."

"You good boy," said the Princess. I do believe if it hadn't been for his Sea-urchin's uniform she would have kissed him. "You're splendid. You're a hero. If you could do it safely—there's heaps of seaweed—could you find out if there's any danger from the Book People? You know—the ones in the cave. It's always been our fear that they might attack, *too*—and if they did—well, I'd rather be the slave of a shark than of Mrs. Fairchild." She gathered an armful of seaweed from the nearest tree and Reuben wrapped himself in it and drifted off—looking less like a live Boy Scout than you could believe possible.

The defenders of Merland, now acting on Reuben's information, began to mass themselves near the North Wall.

"Now is our time," said the Princess. "We must go along the tunnel, and when we hear the sound of their heavy feet shaking the flow of ocean we must make sallies, and fix our shell shields in their feet. Major, rally your men."

A tall merchild in the Crustacean uniform blew a clear note, and the soldiers of the Crustacean Brigade, who having nothing particular to do had been helping anyone and everyone as best they could, which is the way in Merland, gathered about their officers.

When they were all drawn up before her, the Princess addressed her troops.

"My men," she said, "we have been suddenly plunged into war. But it has not found us unprepared. I am proud to think that my regiments are ready to the last pearl-button. And I know that every man among you will be as proud as I am that our post is, as tradition tells us it has always been, the post of danger. We shall go out into the depths of the sea to fight the enemies of our dear country, and to lay down our lives, if need be, for that country's sake."

The soldiers answered by cheers, and the Princess led the way to one of those little buildings, like Temples of Flora in old pictures, which the children had noticed in the gardens. At the order given a sergeant raised a great stone by a golden ring embedded in it and disclosed a dark passage leading underground.

A splendid captain of Cockles, six feet high if he was an inch, with a sergeant and six men, led the way. Three Oyster officers followed, then a company of Oysters, the advance guard. At the head of the main body following were the Princess and her staff. As they went the Princess explained why the tunnel was so long and sloped so steeply.

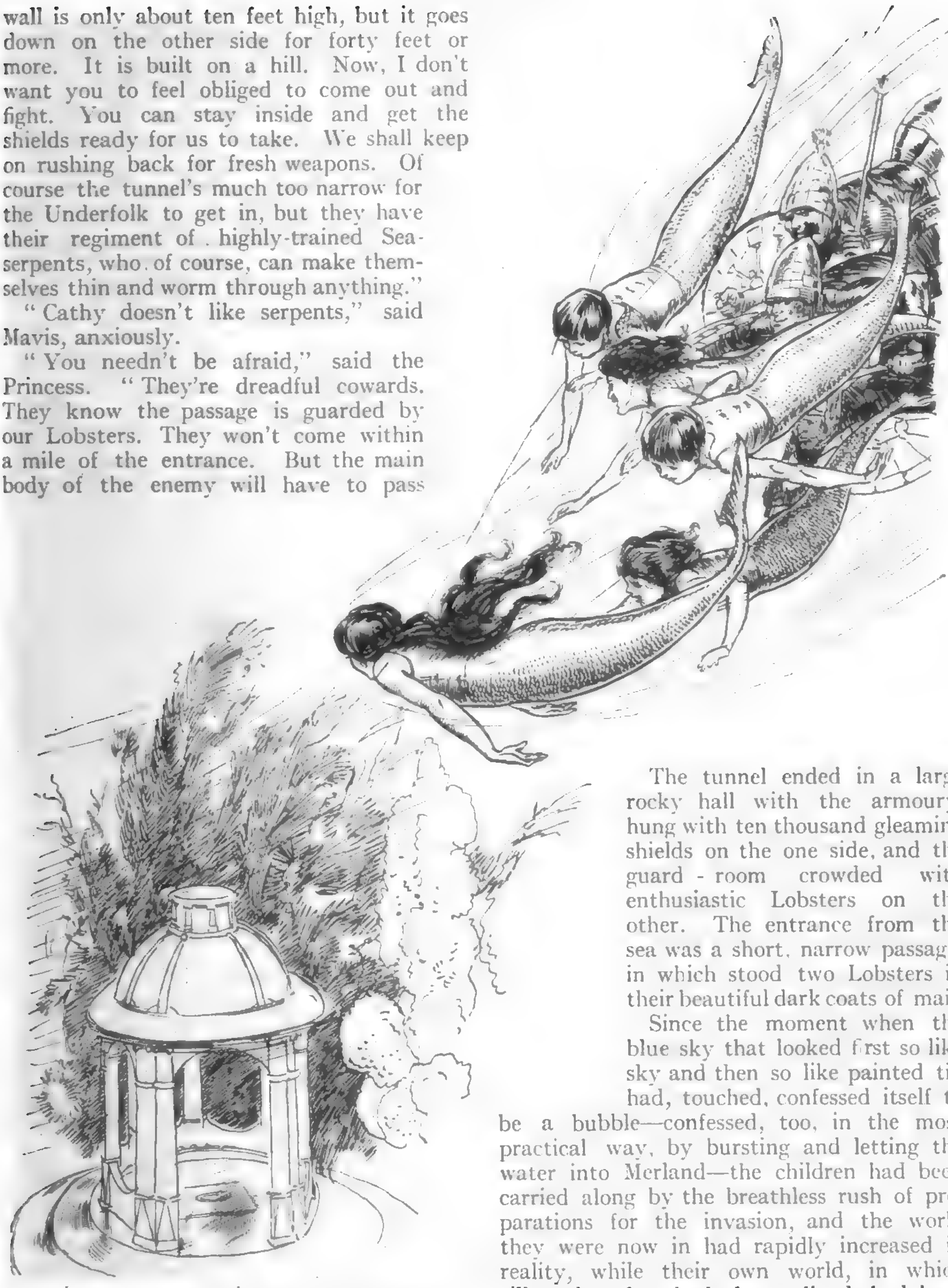
"You see," she said, "the inside of our

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wall is only about ten feet high, but it goes down on the other side for forty feet or more. It is built on a hill. Now, I don't want you to feel obliged to come out and fight. You can stay inside and get the shields ready for us to take. We shall keep on rushing back for fresh weapons. Of course the tunnel's much too narrow for the Underfolk to get in, but they have their regiment of highly-trained Sea-serpents, who of course, can make themselves thin and worm through anything."

"Cathy doesn't like serpents," said Mavis, anxiously.

"You needn't be afraid," said the Princess. "They're dreadful cowards. They know the passage is guarded by our Lobsters. They won't come within a mile of the entrance. But the main body of the enemy will have to pass



"THE PRINCESS LED THE WAY TO ONE OF THOSE LITTLE BUILDINGS, LIKE TEMPLES OF FLORA."

quite close. There's a great sea mountain, and the only way to our North Tower is in the narrow ravine between that mountain and Merland."

The tunnel ended in a large rocky hall with the armoury, hung with ten thousand gleaming shields on the one side, and the guard-room crowded with enthusiastic Lobsters on the other. The entrance from the sea was a short, narrow passage, in which stood two Lobsters in their beautiful dark coats of mail.

Since the moment when the blue sky that looked first so like sky and then so like painted tin had, touched, confessed itself to be a bubble—confessed, too, in the most practical way, by bursting and letting the water into Merland—the children had been carried along by the breathless rush of preparations for the invasion, and the world they were now in had rapidly increased in reality, while their own world, in which till to-day they had always lived, had been losing reality at exactly the same rate as that by which the new world gained it. So it was that when the Princess said:—

"You needn't go out and attack the enemy unless you like," they all answered, in some astonishment:—

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"But we *want* to."

"That's all right," said the Princess. "I only wanted to see if they were in working order."

"If what were?"

"Your coats. They're coats of valour, of course."

"I think I could be brave without a coat," said Bernard and began to undo his pearl-buttons.

"Of course you could," said the Princess. "In fact, you must be brave to begin with, or the coat couldn't work. It would be no good to a coward. It just keeps your natural valour warm and your wits cool."

"It makes you braver," said Kathleen, suddenly. "At least I hope it's me—but I expect it's the coat. Anyhow, I'm glad it does. Because I do want to be brave. Oh, Princess!"

"Well?" said the Princess, gravely but not unkindly, "what is it?"

Kathleen stood a moment, her hands twisting in each other and her eyes downcast. Then in an instant she had unbuttoned and pulled off her coat of pearly-mail and thrown it at the Princess's feet.

"I'll do it without the coat," she said, and drew a long breath.

The others looked on in silence, longing to help her, but knowing that no one could help her now but herself.

"It was Me," said Kathleen, suddenly, and let go a deep breath of relief. "It was me that touched the sky and let in the water; but I am most frightfully sorry, and I know you'll never forgive me. But——"

"Quick," said the Princess, picking up the coat, "get into your armour; it'll prevent your crying." She hustled Kathleen into the coat and kept her arms round her. "Brave girl," she whispered. "I'm glad you did it without the coat." The other three thought it polite to turn away. "Of course," the Princess added, "I knew—but you didn't know I knew."

"How did you know?" said Kathleen.

"By your eyes," said the Princess, with one last hug; "they're quite different now. Come, let us go to the gate and see if any of our scouts are signalling."

The two Lobster sentries presented claws as the Princess passed with her Staff through the narrow arch and on to the sandy plain of the sea-bottom. The children were astonished to find that they could see quite a long way through the water—as far as they could have seen in air, and the view was very like one kind of land view. First the smooth flat sand dotted with copses of branching seaweed—then woods of taller tree-like weeds with rocks shelving up and up to a tall, rocky mountain. This mountain sent out a spur, then ran along beside the Mer-Kingdom and joined the rock behind it; and it was along the narrow gorge so formed that the Underfolk were expected to advance. There were balls of seaweed floating in the air—at least, it really now had grown to seem like air, though of course it was water—but no signs of scouts.

Suddenly the balls of seaweed drew together and the Princess murmured, "I thought so," as they formed into orderly lines, sank to the ground, and remained motionless for a moment while one ball of seaweed stood in front of them.

"It's the Boy Scouts," she said. "Your Reuben is giving them their orders."

It seemed that she was right, for next moment the balls of seaweed drifted away in different directions, and the one who had stood before them drifted straight to the arch where the Princess and the children stood. It drifted in, pulled off its seaweed disguise, and was, in effect, Reuben.

"We've found out something more, your Highness," he said, saluting the Princess. "The vanguard are to be Sea-horses; you know, not the little ones, but the great things they have in the depths."

"No use our attacking the horses," said the Princess. "They're as hard as ice. Who rides them?"

"The First Dipsys," said Reuben. "They're the young Underfolk who want to cut a dash. They call them the Forlorn Hopers, for short."

"Have they got armour?"

"No—that's their swank. They've no armour but their natural scales. Those look thick enough, though. I say, Princess, I suppose we Sea-urchins are free to do exactly as we choose?"

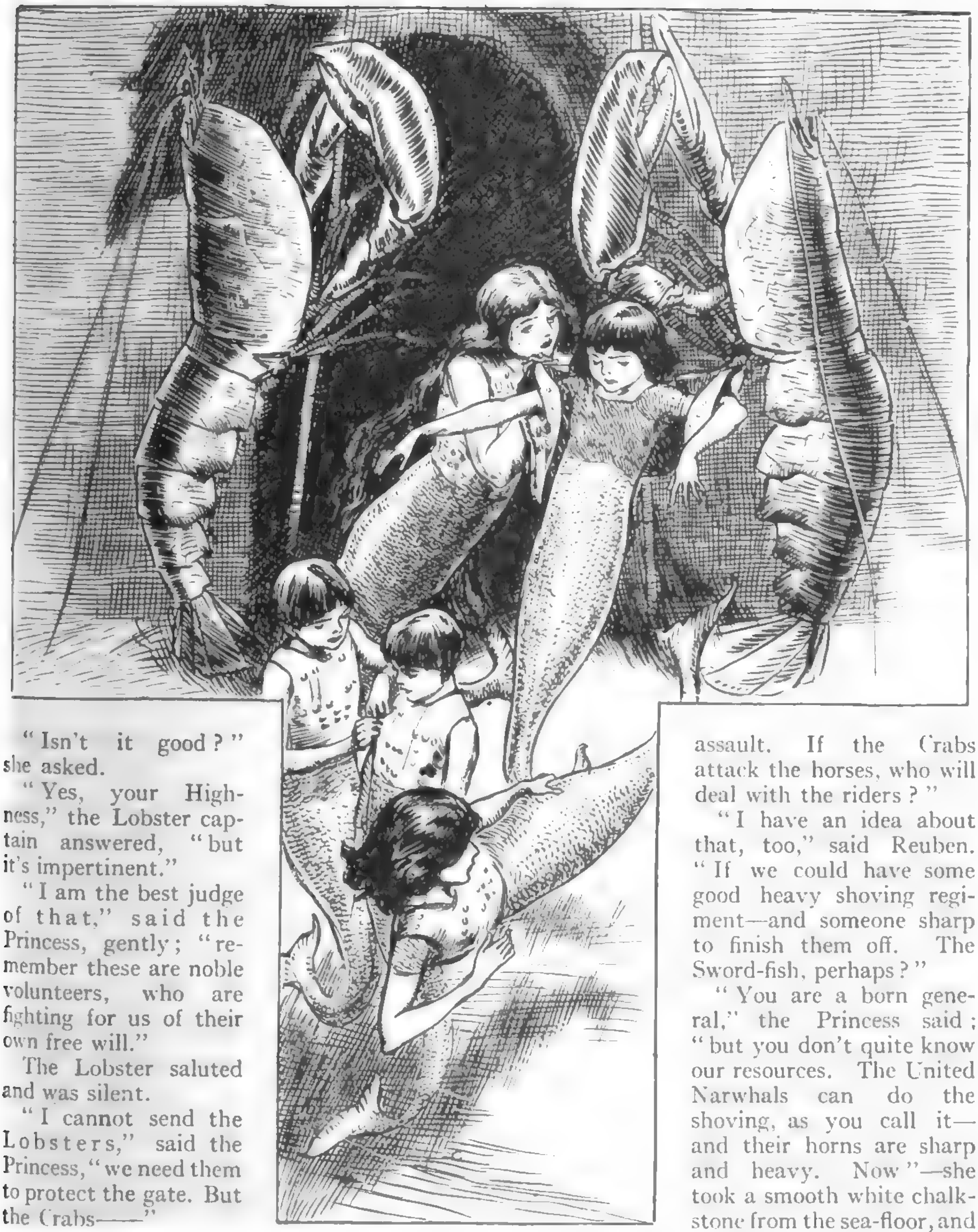
"Yes," said the Princess, "unless orders are given."

"Well, then—my idea is that the Lobsters are the fellows to tackle the Sea-horses. Hold on to their tails, see? They can't hurt the Lobsters because they can't get at their own tails."

"But when the Lobsters let go?" said the Princess.

"The Lobsters wouldn't let go till they had driven back the enemy," said the Lobster captain, saluting. "Your Highness, may I ask if you propose to take this Urchin's advice?"

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"SHE HUSTLED KATHLEEN INTO THE COAT."

"Isn't it good?" she asked.

"Yes, your Highness," the Lobster captain answered, "but it's impertinent."

"I am the best judge of that," said the Princess, gently; "remember these are noble volunteers, who are fighting for us of their own free will."

The Lobster saluted and was silent.

"I cannot send the Lobsters," said the Princess, "we need them to protect the gate. But the Crabs——"

"Ah, Highness, let us go," pleaded the Lobster captain.

"The Crabs cannot keep the gate," said the Princess, kindly. "You know they are not narrow enough. Francis, will you be my aide-de-camp and take a message to the Queen?"

"May I go, too?" asked Mavis.

"Yes. But we must deliver a double assault. If the Crabs attack the horses, who will deal with the riders?"

"I have an idea about that, too," said Reuben. "If we could have some good heavy shoving regiment—and someone sharp to finish them off. The Sword-fish, perhaps?"

"You are a born general," the Princess said; "but you don't quite know our resources. The United Narwhals can do the shoving, as you call it—and their horns are sharp and heavy. Now"—she took a smooth white chalk-stone from the sea-floor, and a ready Lobster brought her a sharpened haddock-bone. She wrote quickly, scratching the letters deep on the chalk.

"Here," she said, "take this to the Queen. You will find her at Headquarters at the Palace-yard. Tell her everything. I have only asked for the two regiments; you must explain the rest. I don't suppose there'll be any difficulty in getting through

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our lines, but, if there should be, the password is 'Glory' and the countersign is 'or death.' And hurry, hurry, hurry for your lives!"

Never before had Mavis and Francis felt anything like the glow of excitement and importance which warmed them as they went up the long tunnel to take the message to the Queen.

"But where is the Palace?" Mavis said, and they stopped, looking at each other.

"I'll show you, please," said a little voice behind them. They turned quickly to find a small, spruce, gentlemanly Mackerel at their heels. "I'm one of the guides," it said. "I felt sure you'd need me. This way, sir, please," and it led the way across the gardens in and out of the clumps of trees and between the seaweed hedges till they came to the Palace. Rows and rows of soldiers surrounded it, all waiting impatiently for the word of command that should send them to meet the enemies of their country.

"Glory" said the gentlemanly Mackerel, as he passed the outposts.

"Or death," replied the sentinel Sea-bream.

The Queen was in the courtyard, in which the children had received their ovation—so short a time ago, and yet how long it seemed. Then the courtyard had been a scene of the calm and charming gaiety of a nation at peace; now it was full of the ardent, intense activity of waiting warriors. The Queen in her gleaming coral armour met them as the password opened a way to her through the close-packed ranks of the soldiers. She took the stone and read it, and with true royal kindness she found time, even at such a moment, for a word of thanks to the messengers.

"See the Narwhals start," she added, "and then back to your posts with all speed. Tell your commanding officer that so far the Book People have made no sign, but the golden gate is strongly defended by the King's Own Cod—and——"

"I didn't know there was a King," said Francis.

The Queen looked stern, and the Mackerel guide jerked Francis's magic coat-tail warningly and whispered "Hush!"

"The King," said the Queen, quietly, "is no more. He was lost at sea."

When the splendid, steady column of Narwhals had marched off to its appointed place the children bowed to the Queen and went back to their posts.

"I'm sorry I said anything," said Francis, to the Mackerel, "but *I* didn't know. Besides, how can a Mer-King be lost at sea?"

"Aren't your Kings lost on land?" asked the Mackerel, "or, if not Kings, men quite as good? What about explorers?"

"I see," said Mavis; "and doesn't anyone know what has become of him?"

"No," said the Mackerel; "he has been lost for a very long time. We fear the worst. If he were alive he would have come back. We think the Underfolk have him. They bewitch prisoners so that they forget who they are. Of course, there's the antidote. Every uniform is made into a little antidote pocket just over the heart." He put his fin inside his scales and produced a little golden case, just like a skate's egg. "You've got them, too, of course," he added. "If you are taken prisoner swallow the contents at once."

"But if you forget who you are," said Francis, "don't you forget the antidote?"

"No charm," the Mackerel assured him, "is strong enough to make one forget one's counter-charm."

And now they were back at the Lobster-guarded gate. The Princess ran to meet them.

"What a time you've been," she said. "Is all well? Have the Narwhals taken up their position?"

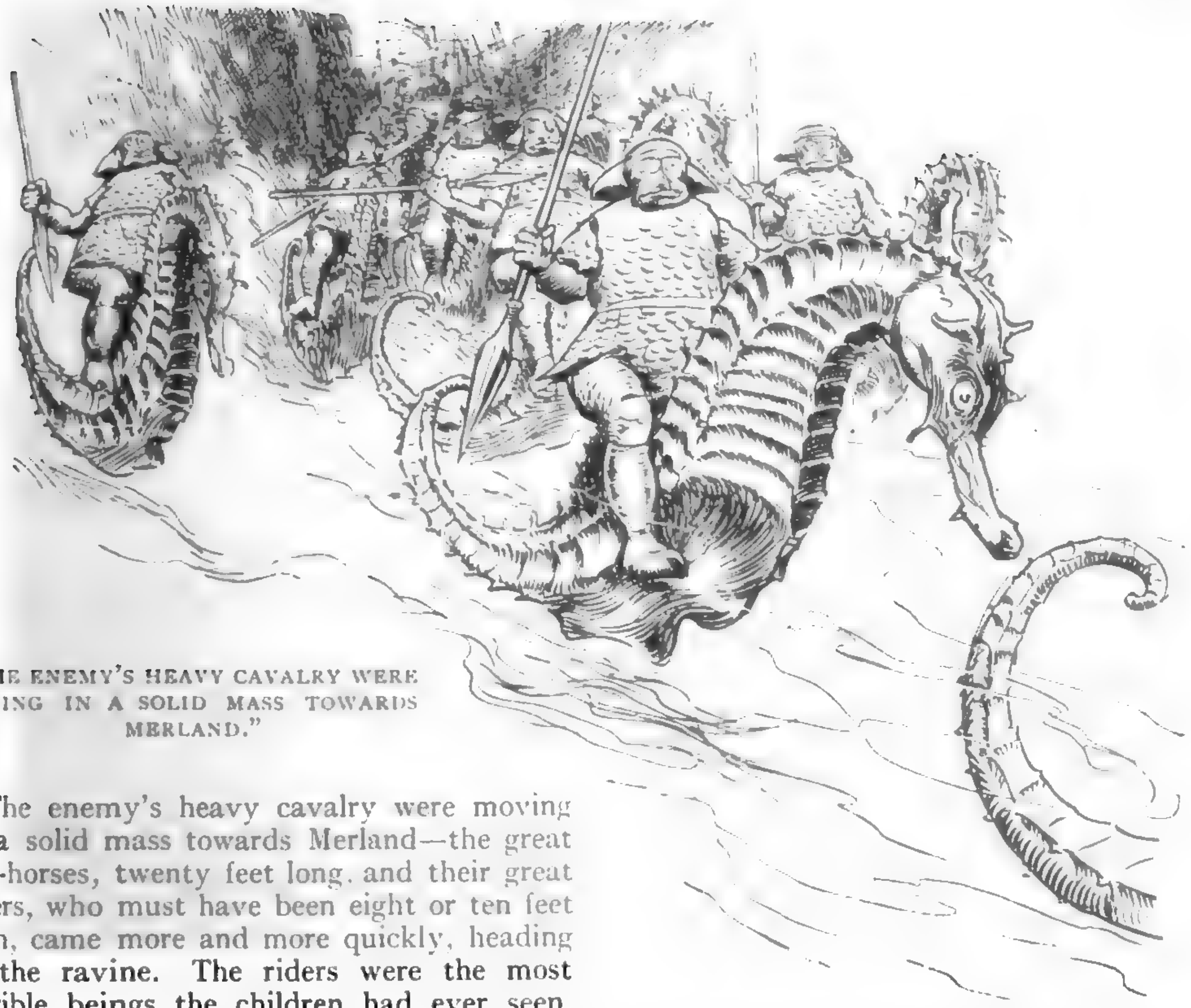
Satisfied on this point, she led the children up a way long and steep to a window in the wall whence they could look down on the ravine and see the advance of the foe. The Narwhals were halted about half-way up the ravine, where it widened to a sort of amphitheatre. Here, among the rocks, they lay in ambush, waiting for the advance of the foe.

"If it hadn't been for you, Reuben," said the Princess, as they leaned their elbows on the broad rocky ledge of the window, "they might easily have stormed the North Tower—we should not have been ready—all our strongest defences were massed on the south side. It was there they attacked last time, so the history-books tell us."

And now a heavy, thundering sound, faint yet terrible, announced the approach of the enemy—and far away across the sea-plain something could be seen moving. A ball of seaweed seemed to drift up the ravine.

"A Sea-urchin gone to give the alarm," said the Princess; "what splendid things Boy Scouts are. We didn't have them in the last war. My dear father only invented them just before——" She paused and sighed. "Look," she said.

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"THE ENEMY'S HEAVY CAVALRY WERE MOVING IN A SOLID MASS TOWARDS MERLAND."

The enemy's heavy cavalry were moving in a solid mass towards Merland—the great Sea-horses, twenty feet long, and their great riders, who must have been eight or ten feet high, came more and more quickly, heading to the ravine. The riders were the most terrible beings the children had ever seen. Clothed from head to feet in closely-fitting scales, with large heads, large ears, large mouths, and blunt noses and large, blind-looking eyes, they sat each erect on his armoured steed, the long harpoons swaying lightly in their enormous hands.

The Sea-horses quickened their pace—and a noise like a hoarse trumpet rang out.

"They are sounding the charge," said the Princess; and as she spoke they charged at the ravine, in a determined, furious onrush.

"Oh, no one can stand up against that—they can't," said Kathie, in despair.

From the window they could see right down on to the amphitheatre, where the Narwhals were concealed.

On came the Sea Cavalry—so far unresisted—but as they neared the ambush bunches of seaweed drifted in the faces of the riders. They floundered and strove to push away the clinging stuff—and as they strove the Narwhals made their sortie—drove their weight against the riders and hurled them from their horses, and from the cover of the rocks the Crabs advanced with an incredible speed and caught the tails of the Sea-horses in their inexorable claws. The riders lay on the ground. The horses were rearing and prancing with fear and pain as the clouds of seaweed, each with a prickly Sea-urchin in it, flung themselves against their faces. The riders stood up, fighting to the last; but the harpoons were no match for the Narwhals' horns.

"Come away," said the Princess.

Already the Sea-horses, urged by the enormous Crabs, were retreating in the wildest disorder, pursued by Narwhals and harassed by Sea-urchins.

The Princess and the children went back to the Lobster sentries.

"Repulsed," said the Princess, "with heavy loss"—and the Lobsters cheered.

"How's that Princess?" said a ball of seaweed, uncurling itself at the gate and presenting the familiar features of Reuben.

"How is it? she said, "it is Victory. And we owe it to you. But you're wounded?"

"Only a scratch," said Reuben; "harpoon just missed me."

"Oh, Reuben, you are a hero," said Kathie.

"Get along, you silly," he answered, gracefully.

(*To be continued.*)

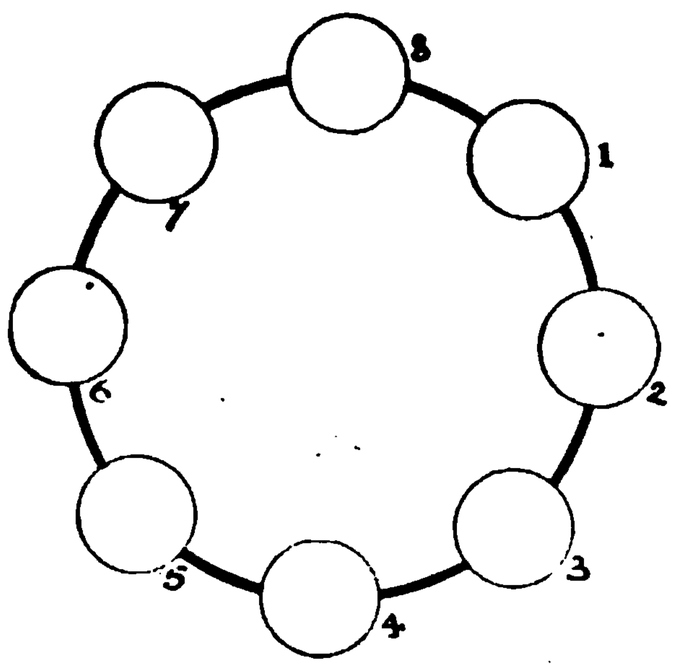
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PERPLEXITIES.

With Some Easy Puzzles for Beginners. By Henry E. Dudeney.

134.—ROUND THE COAST.

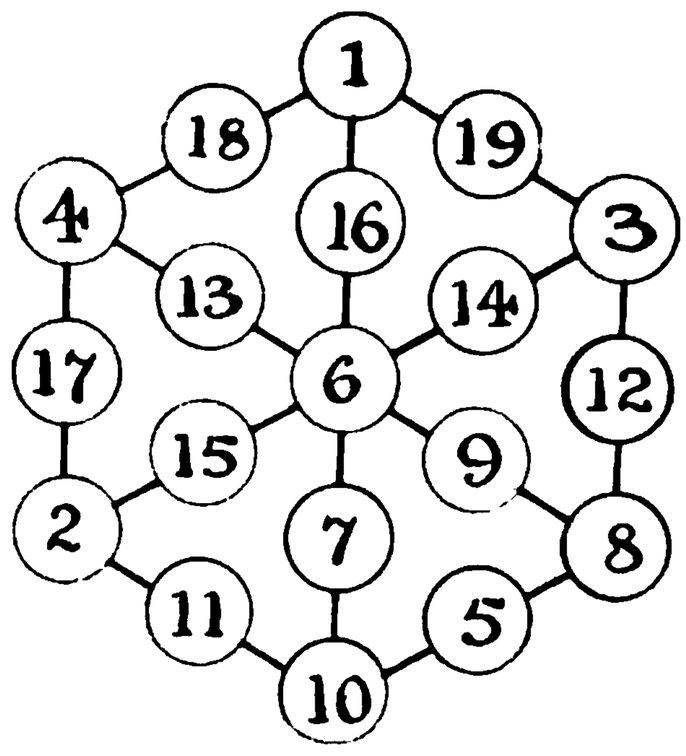
HERE is a puzzle that will, I think, be found as amusing as instructive. We are given a ring of eight circles. Leaving circle 8 blank, we are required to write in the name of a seven-lettered port in the United Kingdom in this manner. Touch a blank circle with your pencil, then jump over two circles in either direction round the ring, and write down the first letter. Then touch another vacant circle, jump over two circles, and write down your second letter.



Proceed similarly with the other letters in their proper order until you have completed the word. Thus, suppose we select "Glasgow," and proceed as follows: 6—1, 7—2, 8—3, 7—4, 8—5, which means that we touch 6, jump over 7 and 8, and write down "G" on 1; then touch 7, jump over 8 and 1, and write down "l" on 2; and so on. It will be found that after we have written down the first five letters—"Glasg"—as above, we cannot go any farther. Either there is something wrong with "Glasgow," or we have not managed our jumps properly. Can you get to the bottom of the mystery?

135.—THE MAGIC HEXAGON.

IN the illustration it will be seen how we have arranged the numbers 1 to 19 so that all the twelve lines of three add up 23. Six of these lines are, of course, the six sides, and the other six lines radiate from the centre. Can you find a different arrangement that will still add up 23 in all the twelve directions? There is only one such arrangement to be found.



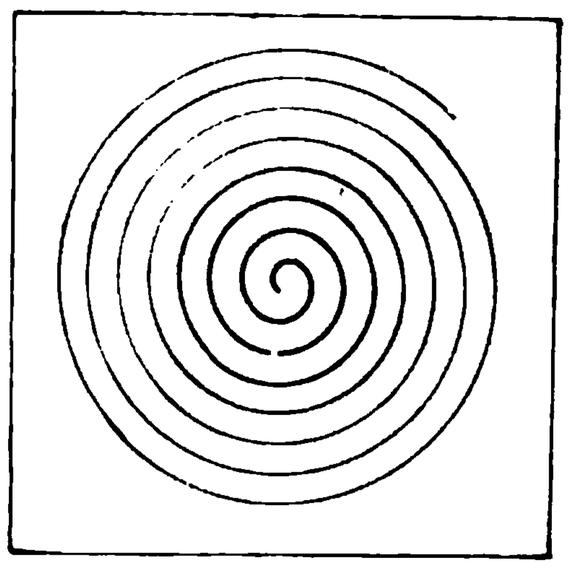
136.—THE TWO CANDLES.

DURING a fog Mr. Gubbins had to put up with two candles, as the electric light was out of order. Though both candles were of the same length, one would burn for four hours and the other for five hours. When the fog lifted and he put the candles out he noticed that what remained of one candle was exactly four times the length of what was left of the other. Now, how long were the candles burning?

137.—QUEER ARITHMETIC.

CAN you take away seven-tenths from five so that exactly four remains?

138.—DRAWING A SPIRAL.



IF you hold the page horizontally and give it a quick rotary motion while looking at the centre of the spiral, it will appear to revolve. Perhaps a good many readers are acquainted with this little optical illusion. But the puzzle is to show how I was able to draw this spiral with so much exactitude without using anything but a pair of compasses and the sheet of paper on which the diagram was made. How would you proceed in such circumstances?

139.—A CHARADE.

MY *first* is a number, my *second* another,
And each, I assure you, will rhyme with the other.
My *first*, you will find, is one-fifth of my *second*,
And truly my *whole* a long period reckoned.
Yet my *first* and my *second* (nay, think not I cozen),
When added together, will make but two dozen.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

128.—THE REVERSE-WAY PUZZLE.

PLAY the counters in the following order: 6, 4, 5, 4, 1, 3, 2, 6, 4, 5, 6, 4, 5, 1, 3, 2, 1, 6, 3, 2, 1, 4, 5, 6, 2, 1, 6, and the puzzle is solved in twenty-seven moves.

129.—SIMPLE DIVISION.

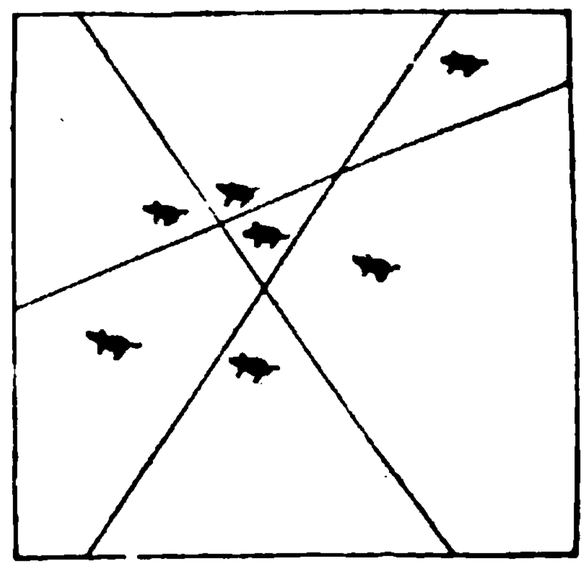
SUBTRACT every number in turn from every other number, and we get 358 (twice), 716, 1,611, 1,253, and 895. Now, we see at a glance that, as 358 equals 2 x 179, the only number that can divide in every case without a remainder will be 179. On trial we find that this is such a divisor. Therefore, 179 is the divisor we want, which always leaves a remainder 164 in the case of the original numbers given.

130.—THE NIHILISTS.

EIGHTEEN were present at the meeting and eleven left. If twelve had gone, two-thirds would have retired. If only nine had gone, the meeting would only have lost half its members.

131.—THE SEVEN PIGS.

THE illustration shows how to erect the three straight fences so that every pig shall have a separate enclosure.



132.—A PARADOX.

THE four men were musicians, and played their instruments in return for payment.

133.—A CHARADE.

THE word is "US-HER."

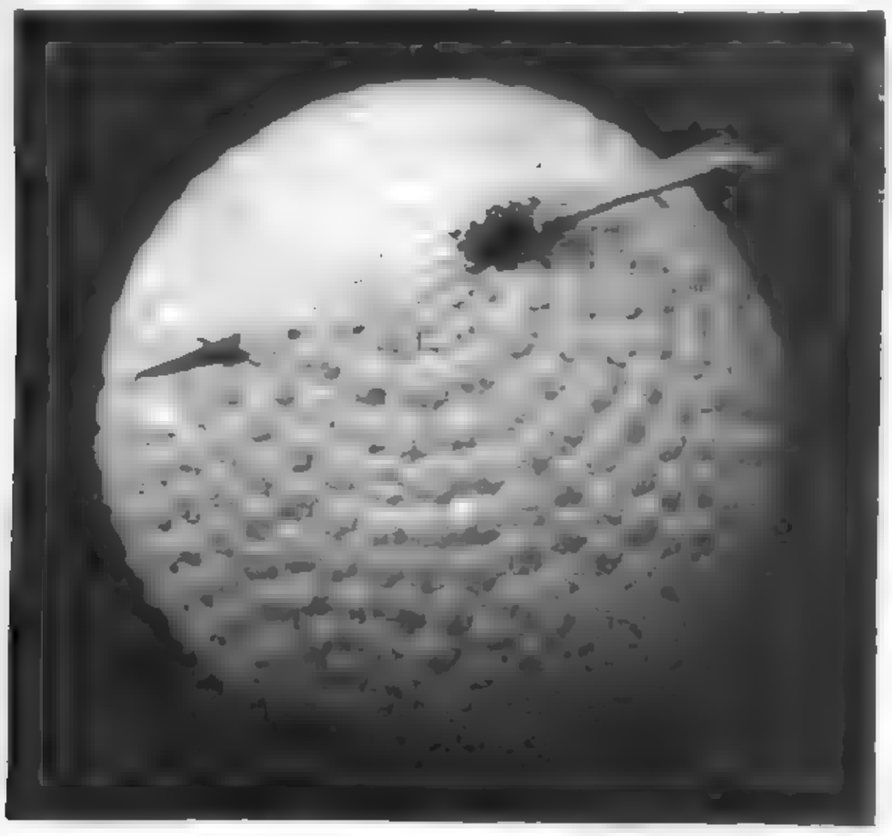
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CURIOSITIES.

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

REMARKABLE GOLFING INCIDENT.

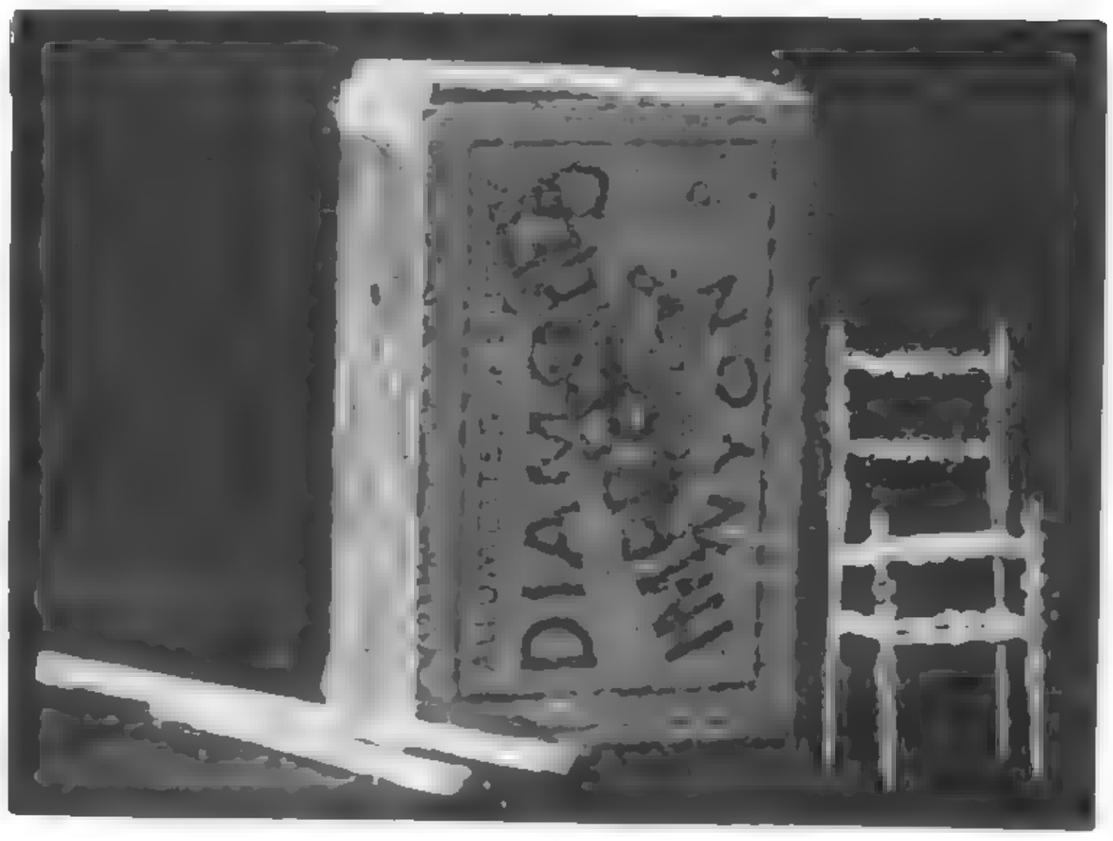
WHILE playing in a match on the Welbeck Golf Links last February, I drove a ball from the eighteenth tee into a tree about thirty yards away, with the result that it was pierced by a thorn in the remarkable way here shown. As will be seen, the thorn



was driven clean through the outer cover of the ball and emerged unbroken. Such an incident is, I think, sufficiently uncommon to be placed on record.—Mr. W. N. Malthouse, Welbeck Abbey, near Worksop.

MADE FROM MATCHES.

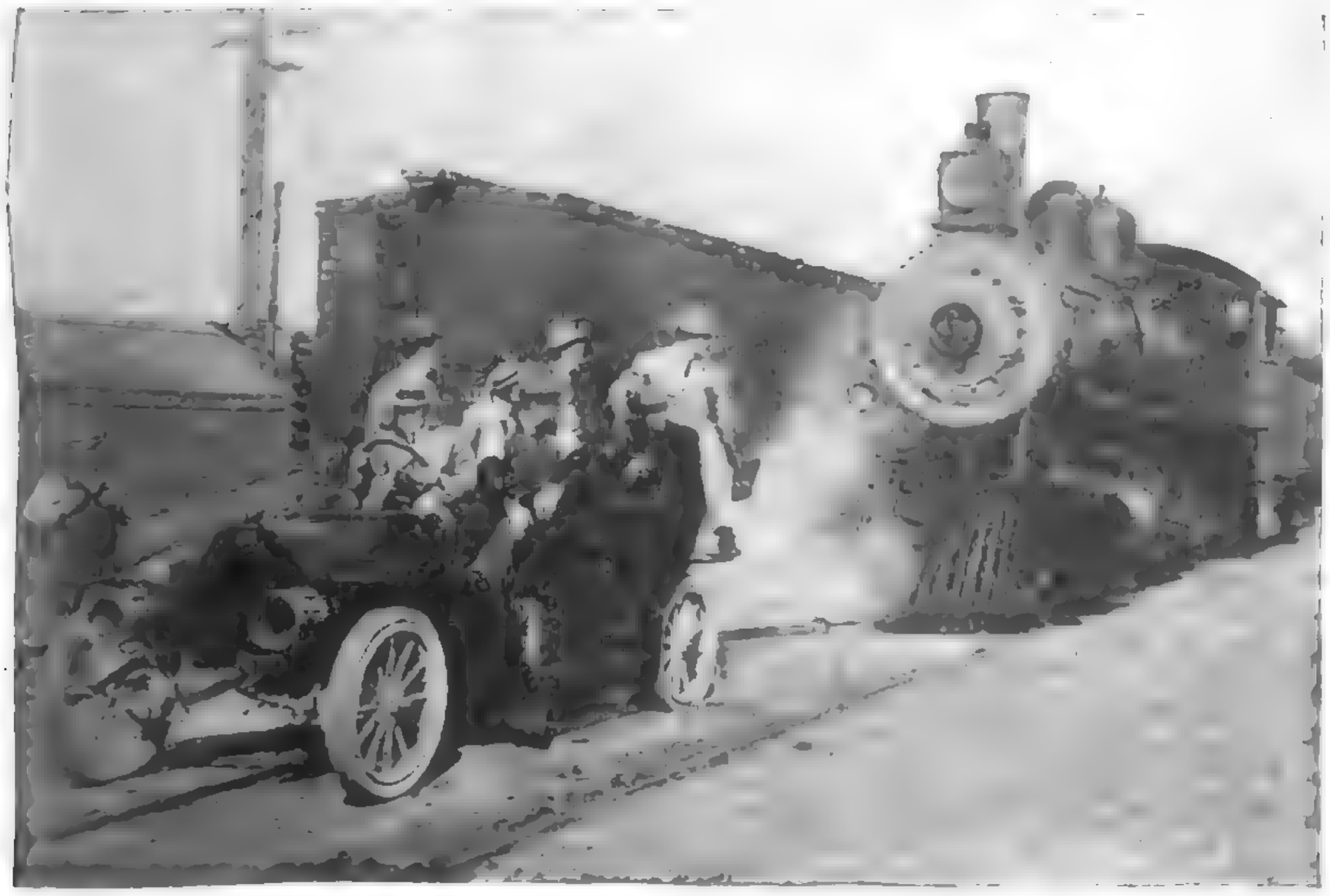
THIS little chair is carved entirely from ordinary matches with a small penknife. It measures an



inch and a half in height and three-quarters of an inch across the seat. The size can be seen by comparison with the matchbox. Each piece is fastened into a tiny groove. It was made by a lady who has been bed-ridden for many years.—J. M., Lausanne, Switzerland.

REMARKABLE TEST OF AUTOMOBILE'S PULLING-POWER.

PROBABLY no more remarkable feat has been recently performed by an automobile than that shown in the accompanying illustration. The local agent of a well-known car in Los Angeles, California, gave a demonstration of the pulling strength of his machine by attaching it, by means of a rope running from the rear axle of the car to the pilot of a hundred-and-ten-ton locomotive, and drawing the locomotive along the track. The start was made from a dead standstill, and it was at first thought impossible to move the great mass of iron and steel, as the wheels of the car slipped badly and the locomotive seemed to be glued to the track. After weighting the car with six good-sized men,



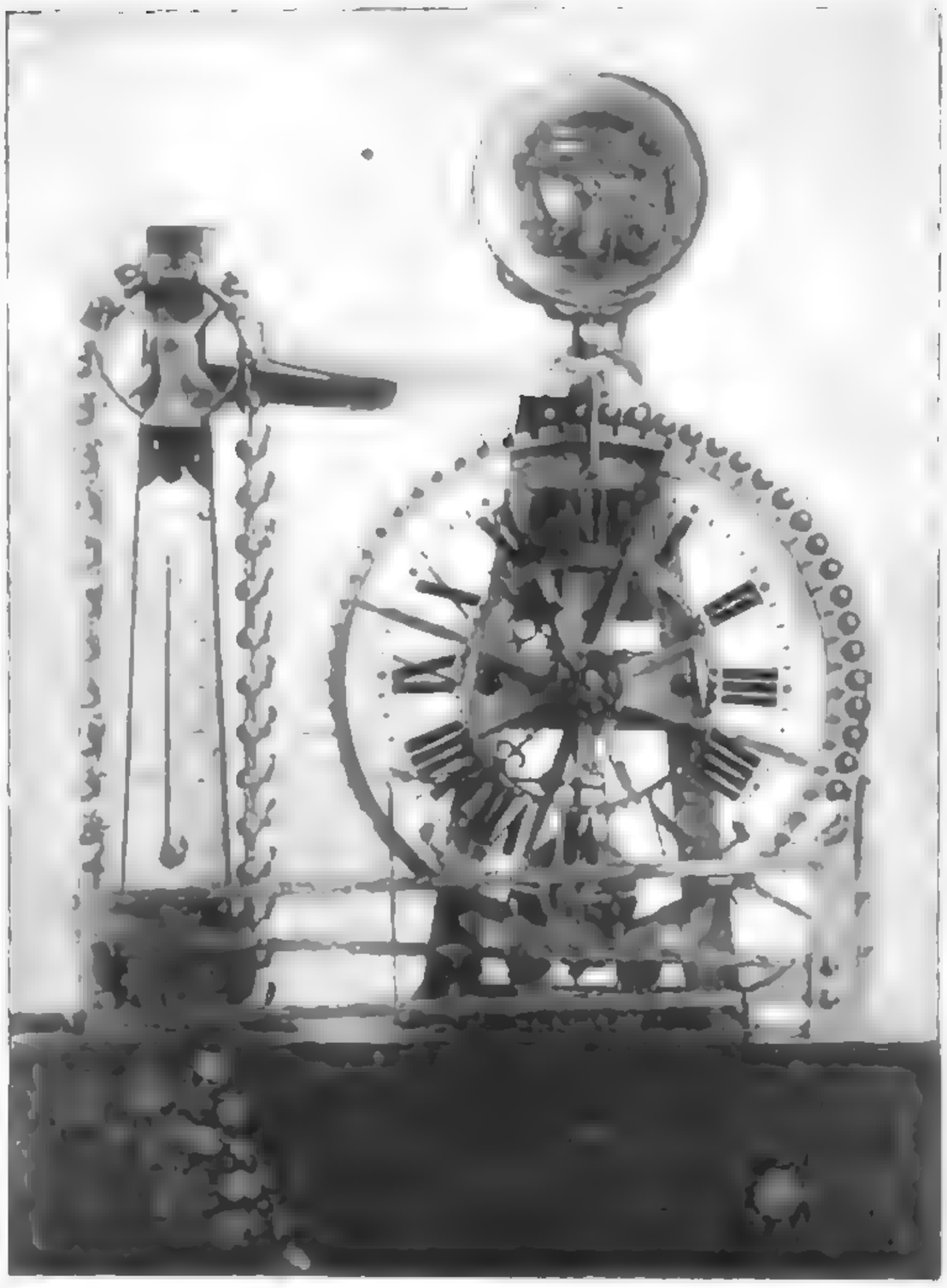
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however, the tyres took a firmer hold, and after a long, steady strain the wheels of the engine began to revolve slowly. The accomplishment of the task is testified to by a number of witnesses, who at first declared it impossible, and looked for the breaking of the rear axle or the pulling out of the entire end of the car. The engine was got under way, however, and drawn for some distance down the track without injury to the automobile in any way.—Mr. Robert H. Moulton, Room L, Board of Trade, Chicago, Illinois.

STEEL BALLS OPERATE A CHRONOMETER.

A REMARKABLE specimen of the clockmaker's art is the chronometer here shown, which is operated by steel balls and regulated by the ordinary type of pendulum and escapement. Forty little spheres of metal are used, and the balance of the works is so delicate that the removal of only three of them will cause a noticeable loss of time, while if four balls are removed the chronometer will stop. The operation is clearly shown in the photograph. The balls drop from the top of an elevator, on the plan of an endless chain of buckets, upon a rim of small compartments that surrounds the face of the clock. The weight of the balls on one side causes the hands to move. Arriving at the lower part of the rim, the balls drop into a runway that leads them to the elevator, whence they are conveyed to the top and the operation is repeated. One ball drops every minute.—Mr. C. L. Edholm, 4,624, Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A.



Double Dummy Bridge Problem.

By W. H. Whitfeld.

Hearts—Knave, 4.
Clubs—Queen.
Diamonds—Ace, queen, 6, 3.

Hearts—10.
Clubs—Ace, 9, 8, 3.
Spades—10, 3.

B
Y Z
A

Hearts—Ace, 9, 7.
Diamonds—Knave, 10.
Spades—Ace, knave.

Hearts—Queen, 8, 3.
Clubs—Knave, 4.
Spades—Queen, 8.

Diamonds are trumps, and A has the lead. A and B are to win six out of the seven tricks against any possible defence.

(Solution will be given next month.)

Solution of Last Month's Bridge Problem.

The card underlined wins the trick. The card immediately beneath is led to the next trick.

A	Y	B	Z
Spades 9	Spades 2	Spades king	Spades 5
Hearts knave !	Spades knave	Spades 3	Spades 7
Hearts 2	Hearts 5	Hearts 8	Hearts 6
Hearts queen !	Spades queen	Spades 4	Spades 8
Hearts 3	Hearts 9	Hearts 10	Hearts 7
Diamonds 5	Hearts king	Hearts ace	Diamonds 2
Diamonds kv.	Diamonds 9	Spades ace	Spades 10
Diamonds qn.	Diamonds 10	Spades 6	Diamonds 3
Diamonds king	(?)	Hearts 4	Clubs 7

At trick 9 Y must throw away the ace of diamonds or unguard his knave of clubs. Either B makes his 8 of diamonds, or A makes his 9 of clubs.

Note that, unless A trumps with an honour at tricks 2 and 4, one of them will have to be led at trick 3 or trick 5, and Y will *refuse to cover* with the king.

International Chess Problem Solutions.

A Cosmopolitan.—K any, 2. Q-B 2, ch., etc. Nos. 1 to 12 are similarly solved. No. 5 (Demangeat), No. 6 (Eppe), No. 7 (Satilberg), and No. 8 (Fernandez) are No. 1 (Pierce), No. 2 (Thomas), No. 3 (Baxter), and No. 4 (McCarthy) respectively, reversed. No. 9 is by Stubbs; No. 10, Portilla; No. 11, L. W. Davis; and No. 12, Helbach.

No. 13, Dupre.—K moves; 2. Q—R 4, ch., etc.

No. 14, Andresen.—K moves; 2. Q—R 4, ch., etc.

No. 15, Laws.—K—Q 4; 2. Kt takes P, ch.; if K—B 4, 2. Q—R 3; and if P—B 4, 2. Kt—K 5, etc.

No. 16, Geffroy.—K moves; 2. Q—B 5, ch., etc.

No. 17, Slater.—K—K 5; 2. Q—B 4, ch.; if K—K 3, 2. Kt—K 3; if K—Kt 3, 2. Q—Q 7; and if K—Kt 5, 2. Q—B 2, etc.

No. 18, Schoch.—K moves; 2. Kt—Q 4, ch., etc.

No. 19, Swatz.—K moves; 2. Kt—Q 5, ch., etc.

No. 20, Ernst.—K moves; 2. Kt—Q 6, etc.

No. 21, Ryan.—K—B 4; 2. Q—Kt 6; if K—K 5, 2. Q—K 3; and if P on, Q—Q 3.

No. 22, Williams.—Same.

No. 23, Mackenzie.—K—K 7; 2. Q—K 3, ch.; if K—B 7, 2. Q—B 3, ch., etc.

No. 24, H. F. L. Meyer.—K—Q 5; 2. Q—B 2, ch.; if K—Kt 3, 2. Q—B 6, ch.; if K—Q 3, 2. Q—B 8, ch.; and if K—Kt 5, 2. Q—Q 5, ch., etc.

No. 25, M. T. Meyer.—K—Q 2; 2. Q—K 5; if K—Q 4, 2. Q—Kt 3; and if other, 2. Q—B 6, ch., etc.

No. 26, Dubbe.—K takes Kt, Q—K 6; if other, 2. Q—Q 3, etc.

No. 27, Krag.—K—Q 2; 2. Q—R 7, ch.; if K—Kt 4, Q—Q Kt 1, ch.; and if K—Q 4, 2. Q takes Kt, ch., etc.

No. 28, Vianno.—K any; 2. Q takes R, etc.

No. 29, Noack.—K—Q 2; 2. K—B 4; if other, 2. Q—B 4, ch., etc.

No. 30, Corrias.—Any; 2. Q—Q R 8, ch., etc

No. 31, McIntyre.—Kt—Kt 6; 2. B—R 2; if Kt takes P, 2. Kt—B 7, ch.

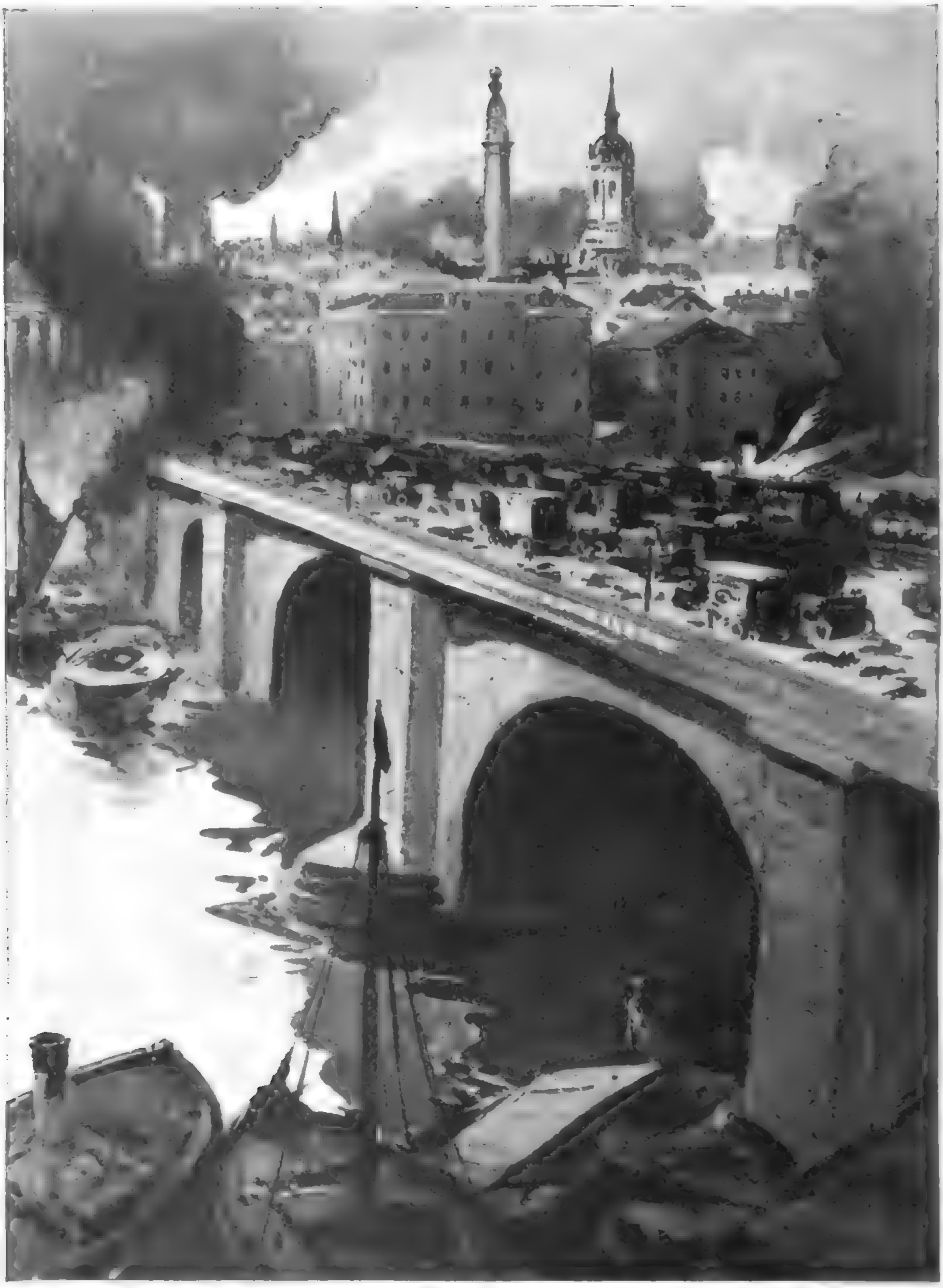
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THE SCOTT POLAR EXPEDITION.

WE HAVE MUCH PLEASURE IN ANNOUNCING THAT THE COMPLETE, FULLY-ILLUSTRATED STORY OF THE SPLENDID HEROISM OF CAPTAIN SCOTT AND HIS COMPANIONS, THE BRITISH RIGHTS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN SECURED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THIS MAGAZINE, WILL COMMENCE IN THE JULY NUMBER.

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"A SHIP WAS BLAZING BRIGHTLY ALONGSIDE ONE OF THE WHARVES NEAR THE BRIDGE, AND THE AIR WAS FULL OF DRIFTING SMUTS AND OF A HEAVY ACRID SMELL OF BURNING."

(*See page* 610.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. xlv. JUNE, 1913. No. 270.

THE POISON BELT.

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

Illustrated by Harry Rountree.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Professor Challenger has invited his old friends, Lord John Roxton, Professor Summerlee, and E. D. Malone, to spend a day with him at his home in Sussex, and while journeying down they eagerly discuss the news that a mysterious and universal outbreak of illness has occurred among the natives of Sumatra, and that the lighthouses are all dark in the Straits of Sunda. They are doubly interested in the news as Challenger himself has a letter on the subject in that morning's *Times*. His theory, as he explains when he meets them, is that the world has swum into a stratum, or poison belt, of ether, and that the fate which has befallen the Sumatran natives will quickly overtake the rest of the earth's inhabitants. During the morning they learn by telephone that the great shadow is creeping up from the South, leaving in its wake a trail of death—painless but inevitable—over a great portion of the earth. Challenger's home being on an eminence, which, so far, the poisonous vapour has not entirely submerged, he and his friends are able to watch from an upper room, in which they hope to keep the atmosphere pure for a few hours by means of oxygen, the tide of death creeping towards them. As hour by hour passes, and the supply of oxygen gradually runs low, the atmosphere becomes so insufferable that they decide to face the poisonous ether rather than be slowly stifled to death within the room. The window being plastered up, Challenger hurls a pair of field-glasses through it, and is astonished to feel the rush of wholesome air that comes blowing in. "We are back in normal conditions," he cries. "The world has cleared the poison belt, but we alone of all mankind are saved."

CHAPTER V.

THE DEAD WORLD.

I REMEMBER that we all sat gasping in our chairs, with that sweet, wet south-western breeze, fresh from the sea, flapping the muslin curtains and cooling our flushed faces. I wonder how long we sat! None of us afterwards could agree at all upon that point. We were bewildered, stunned, semi-conscious. We had all braced our courage for death, but this fearful and sudden new fact—that we must continue to live after we had survived the race to which we belonged—struck us with the shock of a physical blow, and left us prostrate. Then gradually the suspended mechanism began to work once more; ideas weaved themselves together in our minds. We saw, with vivid, merciless clearness, the relations between the past, the present, and the future—the lives that we had led and the lives which we would have to live. Our eyes turned in silent horror upon those of our companions and found the same answering look in theirs. Instead of the joy which men might have been expected to feel who had so narrowly escaped an imminent death, a terrible wave of darkest depression submerged us. Every-

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thing on earth that we loved had been washed away into the great, infinite, unknown ocean, and here were we marooned upon this desert island of a world, without companions, hopes, or aspirations. A few years skulking like jackals among the graves of the human race, and then our own belated end would come.

"It's dreadful, George, dreadful!" the lady cried, in an agony of sobs. "If we had only passed with the others! Oh, why did you save us? I feel as if it is we that are dead and every-one else alive."

Challenger's great eyebrows were drawn down in concentrated thought, while his huge, hairy paw closed upon the outstretched hand of his wife. I had observed that she always held out her arms to him in trouble as a child would to its mother.

"Without being a fatalist to the point of non-resistance," said he, "I have always found that the highest wisdom lies in an acquiescence with the actual." He spoke slowly, and there was a vibration of feeling in his sonorous voice.

"I do *not* acquiesce," said Summerlee, firmly.



"I HAVE MY HUSBAND AND MY HOUSE."

"I don't see that it matters a row of pins whether you acquiesce or whether you don't," remarked Lord John. "You've got to take it, whether you take it fightin' or take it lyin' down, so what's the odds whether you acquiesce or not? I can't remember that anyone asked our permission before the thing began, and nobody's likely to ask it now. So what difference can it make what we may think of it?"

"It is just all the difference between happiness and misery," said Challenger, with an abstracted face, still patting his wife's hand. "You can swim with the tide and have peace in mind and so I, or you can thrust against it and be bruised and weary. This business is beyond us, so let us accept it as it stands and say no more."

"But what in the world are we to do with our lives?" I asked, appealing in desperation to the blue, empty heaven. "What am I to do, for example? There are no newspapers, so there's an end of my vocation."

"And there's nothin' left to shoot, and no more soldierin', so there's an end of mine," said Lord John.

"And there are no students, so there's an end of mine," cried Summerlee.

"But I have my husband and my house, so I can thank Heaven that there is no end of mine," said the lady.

"Nor is there an end of mine," remarked Challenger, "for science is not dead, and this catastrophe in itself will offer us many problems for investigation."

He had now flung open the windows and we were gazing out upon the silent and motionless landscape.

"Let me consider," he continued. "It was about three, or a little after, yesterday afternoon that the world finally entered the

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poison belt to the extent of being completely submerged. It is now nine o'clock. The question is, at what hour did we pass out from it?"

"The air was very bad at daybreak," said I.

"Later than that," said Mrs. Challenger. "As late as eight o'clock I distinctly felt the same choking at my throat which came at the outset."

"Then we shall say that it passed just after eight o'clock. For seventeen hours the world has been soaked in the poisonous ether. For that length of time the Great Gardener has sterilized the human mould which had grown over the surface of His fruit. Is it possible that the work is incompletely done—that others may have survived besides ourselves?"

"That's what I was wonderin'," said Lord John. "Why should we be the only pebbles on the beach?"

"It is absurd to suppose that anyone besides ourselves can possibly have survived," said Summerlee, with conviction. "Consider that the poison was so virulent that even a man who is as strong as an ox, and has not a nerve in his body, like Malone here, could hardly get up the stair before he fell unconscious. Is it likely that anyone could stand seventeen minutes of it, far less hours?"

"Unless someone saw it coming and made preparation, same as old friend Challenger did."

"That, I think, is hardly probable," said Challenger, projecting his beard and sinking his eyelids. "The combination of observation, inference, and anticipatory imagination which enabled me to foresee the danger is what one can hardly expect twice in the same generation."

"Then your conclusion is that everyone is certainly dead?"

"There can be little doubt of that. We have to remember, however, that the poison worked from below upwards, and would possibly be less virulent in the higher strata of the atmosphere. It is strange, indeed, that it should be so; but it presents one of those features which will afford us in the future a fascinating field for study. One could imagine, therefore, that if one had to search for survivors one would turn one's eyes with best hopes of success to some Tibetan village or some Alpine farm, many thousands of feet above the sea-level."

"Well, considerin' that there are no railroads and no steamers you might as well talk about survivors in the moon," said Lord John. "But what I'm askin' myself is whether it's really over or whether it's only half-time."

Summerlee craned his neck to look round the horizon.

"It seems clear and fine," said he, in a very dubious voice; "but so it did yesterday. I am by no means assured that it is all over."

Challenger shrugged his shoulders.

"We must come back once more to our fatalism," said he. "If the world has undergone this experience before, which is not outside the range of possibility, it was certainly a very long time ago. Therefore, we may reasonably hope that it will be very long before it occurs again."

"That's all very well," said Lord John; "but if you get an earthquake shock you are mighty likely to have a second one right on the top of it. I think we'd be wise to stretch our legs and have a breath of air while we have the chance. Since our oxygen is exhausted we may just as well be caught outside as in."

It was strange the absolute lethargy which had come upon us as a reaction after our tremendous emotions of the last twenty-four hours. It was both mental and physical, a deep-lying feeling that nothing mattered and that everything was a weariness and a profitless exertion. Even Challenger had succumbed to it, and sat in his chair with his great head leaning upon his hands, and his thoughts far away, until Lord John and I, catching him by each arm, fairly lifted him on to his feet, receiving only the glare and growl of an angry mastiff for our trouble. However, once we had got out of our narrow haven of refuge into the wider atmosphere of everyday life, our normal energy came gradually back to us once more.

But what were we to begin to do in that graveyard of a world? Could ever men have been faced with such a question since the dawn of time? It is true that our own physical needs, and even our luxuries, were assured for the future. All the stores of food, all the vintages of wine, all the treasures of art were ours for the taking. But what were we to *do?* Some few tasks appealed to us at once, since they lay ready to our hands. We descended into the kitchen, and laid the two domestics upon their respective beds. They seemed to have died without suffering, one in the chair by the fire, the other upon the scullery floor. Then we carried in poor Austin from the yard. His muscles were set as hard as a board in the most exaggerated

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rigor mortis, while the contraction of the fibres had drawn his mouth into a hard sardonic grin. This symptom was prevalent among all who had died from the poison. Wherever we went we were welcomed by those grinning faces, which seemed to mock at our dreadful position, smiling silently and grimly at the ill-fated survivors of their race.

"Look here," said Lord John, who had paced restlessly about the dining room whilst we partook of some food, "I don't know how you fellows feel about it, but for my part, I simply *can't* sit here and do nothin'."

"Perhaps," Challenger answered, "you would have the kindness to suggest what you think we ought to do."

"Get a move on us and see all that has happened."

"That is what I should myself propose."

"But not in this little country village. We can see from this window all that this place can teach us."

"Where shou'd we go, then?"

"To London!"

"That's all very well," grumbled Summerlee. "You may be equal to a forty-mile walk, but I'm not so sure about Challenger, with his stumpy legs, and I am perfectly sure about myself."

Challenger was very much annoyed.

"If you could see your way, sir, to confining your remarks to your own physical peculiarities, you would find that you had an ample field for comment," he cried.

"I had no intention to offend you, my dear Challenger," cried our tactless friend. "You can't be held responsible for your own physique. If Nature has given you a short, heavy body you cannot possibly help having stumpy legs."

Challenger was too furious to answer. He could only growl and blink and bristle. Lord John hastened to intervene before the dispute became more violent.

"You talk of walking. Why should we walk?" said he.

"Do you suggest taking the train?" asked Challenger, still simmering.

"What's the matter with the motor-car? Why should we not go in that?"

"I am not an expert," said Challenger, pulling at his beard, reflectively. "At the same time, you are right in supposing that the human intellect in its higher manifestations should be sufficiently flexible to turn itself to anything. Your idea is an excellent one, Lord John. I myself will drive you all to London."

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Summerlee, with decision.

"No, indeed, George!" cried his wife. "You only tried once, and you remember how you crashed through the gate of the garage."

"It was a momentary want of concentration," said Challenger, complacently. "You can consider the matter settled. I will certainly drive you all to London."

The situation was relieved by Lord John.

"What's the car?" he asked.

"A twenty-horse Humber."

"Why, I've driven one for years," said he. "By George!" he added. "I never thought I'd live to take the whole human race in one load. There's just room for five, as I remember it. Get your things on, and I'll be ready at the door by ten o'clock."

Sure enough, at the hour named, the car came purring and crackling from the yard with Lord John at the wheel. I took my seat beside him, while the lady, a useful little buffer state, was squeezed in between the two men of wrath at the back. Then Lord John released his brakes, slid his lever rapidly from first to third, and we sped off upon the strangest drive that ever human beings have taken since man first came upon the earth.

You are to picture the loveliness of Nature upon that August day, the freshness of the morning air, the golden glare of the summer sunshine, the cloudless sky, the luxuriant green of the Sussex woods, and the deep purple of the heather-clad downs. As you looked round upon the many-coloured beauty of the scene all thought of a vast catastrophe would have passed from your mind had it not been for one sinister sign—the solemn, all-embracing silence. There is a gentle hum of life which pervades a closely-settled country, so deep and constant that one ceases to observe it, as the dweller by the sea loses all sense of the constant murmur of the waves. The twitter of birds, the buzz of insects, the far-off echo of voices, the lowing of cattle, the distant barking of dogs, roar of trains, and rattle of carts—all these form one low, unremitting note striking unheeded upon the ear. We missed it now. This deadly silence was appalling. So solemn was it, so impressive, that the buzz and rattle of our motor-car seemed an unwarrantable intrusion, an indecent disregard of this reverent stillness which lay like a pall over and round the ruins of humanity. It was this grim hush, and the tall clouds of smoke which rose here and there over the country-

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"IT WAS THIS GRIM HUSH, AND THE TALL CLOUDS OF SMOKE WHICH ROSE HERE AND THERE OVER THE COUNTRY-SIDE, WHICH CAST A CHILL INTO OUR HEARTS."

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side from smouldering buildings, which cast a chill into our hearts as we gazed round at the glorious panorama of the Weald.

And then there were the dead! At first those endless groups of drawn and grinning faces filled us with a shuddering horror. So vivid and mordant was the impression that I can live over again that slow descent of the Station Hill, the passing by the nurse-girl with the two babes, the sight of the old horse on his knees between the shafts, the cabman twisted across his seat, and the young man inside with his hand upon the open door in the very act of springing out. Lower down were six reapers all in a litter, their limbs crossing, their dead, unwinking eyes gazing upwards at the glare of heaven. These things I see as in a photograph. But soon, by the merciful provision of Nature, the over-excited nerve ceased to respond. The very vastness of the horror took away from its personal appeal. Individuals merged into groups, groups into crowds, crowds into a universal phenomenon which one soon accepted as the inevitable detail of every scene. Only here and there, where some particularly brutal or grotesque incident caught the attention, did the mind come back with a sudden shock to the personal and human meaning of it all.

Above all these was the fate of the children. That, I remember, filled us with the strongest sense of intolerable injustice. We could have wept—Mrs. Challenger did weep—when we passed a great Council school and saw the long trail of tiny figures scattered down the road which led from it. They had been dismissed by their terrified teachers, and were speeding for their homes when the poison caught them in its net. Great numbers of people were at the open windows of the houses. In Tunbridge Wells there was hardly one which had not its staring, smiling face. At the last instant the need of air, that very craving for oxygen which we alone had been able to satisfy, had sent them flying to the window. The side walks, too, were littered with men and women, hatless and bonnetless, who had rushed out of the houses. Many of them had fallen in the roadway. It was a lucky thing that in Lord John we had found an expert driver, for it was no easy matter to pick one's way. Passing through the villages or towns we could only go at a walking pace, and once, I remember, opposite the school at Tonbridge, we had to halt some time while we carried aside the bodies which blocked our path.

A few small, definite pictures stand out in my memory from amid that long panorama of death upon the Sussex and Kentish high roads. One was that of a great, glittering motor-car standing outside the inn at the village of Southborough. It bore, as I should guess, some pleasure party upon their return from Brighton or from Eastbourne. There were three gaily-dressed women, all young and beautiful, one of them with a Peking spaniel upon her lap. With them were a rakish-looking elderly man and a young aristocrat, his eyeglass still in his eye, his cigarette burned down to the stub between the fingers of his begloved hand. Death must have come on them in an instant and fixed them as they sat. Save that the elderly man had at the last moment torn out his collar in an effort to breathe, they might all have been asleep. On one side of the car a waiter with some broken glasses beside a tray was huddled near the step. On the other two very ragged tramps, a man and a woman, lay where they had fallen, the man with his long, thin arm still outstretched, even as he had asked for alms in his lifetime. One instant of time had put aristocrat, waiter, tramp, and dog upon one common footing of inert and dissolving protoplasm.

I remember another singular picture some miles on the London side of Sevenoaks. There is a large convent upon the left with a long, green slope in front of it. Upon this slope were assembled a great number of school children, all kneeling at prayer. In front of them was a fringe of nuns, and higher up the slope, facing towards them, a single figure whom we took to be the Mother Superior. Unlike the pleasure-seekers in the motor-car, these people seemed to have had warning of their danger, and to have died beautifully together, the teachers and the taught, assembled for their last common lesson.

My mind is still stunned by that terrific experience, and I grope vainly for means of expression by which I can reproduce the emotions which we felt. Perhaps it is best and wisest not to try, but merely to indicate the facts. Even Summerlee and Challenger were crushed, and we heard nothing of our companions behind us save an occasional whimper from the lady. As to Lord John, he was too intent upon his wheel and the difficult task of threading his way along such roads to have time or inclination for conversation. One phrase he used with such wearisome iteration that it stuck in my memory, and at last almost made me laugh as a comment upon the day of doom.

"Pretty doin's! What!"

That was his ejaculation as each fresh

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tremendous combination of death and disaster displayed itself before us. "Pretty doin's! What!" he cried, as we descended the Station Hill at Rotherfield, and it was still "Pretty doin's! What!" as we picked our way through a wilderness of death in the High Street of Lewisham and the Old Kent Road.

It was here that we received a sudden and amazing shock. Out of the window of a humble corner house there appeared a fluttering handkerchief waving at the end of a long, thin human arm. Never had the sight of unexpected death caused our hearts to stop and then throb so wildly as did this amazing indication of life. Lord John ran the motor to the kerb, and in an instant we had rushed through the open door of the house and up the staircase to the second-floor front room from which the signal proceeded.

A very old lady sat in a chair by the open window, and close to her, laid across a second chair, was a cylinder of oxygen, smaller but of the same shape as those which had saved our own lives. She turned her thin, drawn, bespectacled face towards us as we crowded in at the doorway.

"I feared that I was abandoned here for ever," said she, "for I am an invalid and cannot stir."



"'I FEARED THAT I WAS ABANDONED HERE FOR EVER,' SAID SHE."

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"Well, madam," Challenger answered, "it is a lucky chance that we happened to pass."

"I have one all-important question to ask you," said she. "Gentlemen, I beg that you will be frank with me. What effect will these events have upon London and North-Western Railway shares?"

We should have laughed had it not been for the tragic eagerness with which she listened for our answer. Mrs. Burston, for that was her name, was an aged widow whose whole income depended upon a small holding of this stock. Her life had been regulated by the rise or fall of the dividend, and she could form no conception of existence save as it was affected by the quotation of her shares. In vain we pointed out to her that all the money in the world was hers for the taking, and was useless when taken. Her old mind would not adapt itself to the new idea, and she wept loudly over her vanished stock. "It was all I had," she wailed. "If that is gone I may as well go too."

Amid her lamentations we found out how this frail old plant had lived where the whole great forest had fallen. She was a confirmed invalid and an asthmatic. Oxygen had been prescribed for her malady, and a tube was in her room at the moment of the crisis. She had naturally inhaled some as had been her habit when there was a difficulty with her breathing. It had given her relief, and by doling out her supply she had managed to survive the night. Finally she had fallen asleep and been awakened by the buzz of our motor-car. As it was impossible to take her on with us, we saw that she had all necessaries of life and promised to communicate with her in a couple of days at the latest. So we left her, still weeping bitterly over her vanished stock.

As we approached the Thames the block in the streets became thicker and the obstacles more bewildering It was with difficulty that we made our way across London Bridge. The approaches to it upon the Middlesex side were choked from end to end with frozen traffic which made all further advance in that direction impossible. A ship was blazing brightly alongside one of the wharves near the bridge, and the air was full of drifting smuts and of a heavy acrid smell of burning. There was a cloud of dense smoke somewhere near the Houses of Parliament, but it was impossible from where we were to see what was on fire.

"I don't know how it strikes you," Lord John remarked, as he brought his engine to a standstill, "but it seems to me the country is more cheerful than the town. Dead London is gettin' on my nerves. I'm for a cast round and then gettin' back to Rotherfield."

"I confess that I do not see what we can hope for here," said Professor Summerlee.

"At the same time," said Challenger, his great voice booming strangely amid the silence, "it is difficult for us to conceive that out of seven millions of people there is only this one old woman who by some peculiarity of constitution or some accident of occupation has managed to survive this catastrophe."

"If there should be others, how can we hope to find them, George?" asked the lady. "And yet I agree with you that we cannot go back until we have tried."

Getting out of the car, and leaving it by the kerb, we walked with some difficulty along the crowded pavement of King William Street, and entered the open door of a large insurance office. It was a corner house, and we chose it as commanding a view in every direction. Ascending the stair, we passed through what I suppose to have been the board-room, for eight elderly men were seated round a long table in the centre of it. The high window was open and we all stepped out upon the balcony. From it we could see the crowded City streets radiating in every direction, while below us the road was black from side to side with the tops of the motionless taxis. All, or nearly all, had their heads pointed outwards, showing how the terrified men of the City had at the last moment made a vain endeavour to rejoin their families in the suburbs or the country. Here and there amid the humbler cabs towered the great brass-spangled motor-car of some wealthy magnate wedged hopelessly amongst the dammed stream of arrested traffic. Just beneath us there was such a one of great size and luxurious appearance, with its owner, a fat old man, leaning out, half his gross body through the window, and his podgy hand, gleaming with diamonds, outstretched as he urged his chauffeur to make a last effort to break through the press.

A dozen motor-buses towered up like islands in this flood, the passengers who crowded the roofs lying all huddled together and across each others' laps like a child's toys in a nursery. On a broad lamp pedestal, in the centre of the roadway, a burly policeman was standing, leaning his back against

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"ON A BROAD LAMP PEDESTAL A BURLY POLICEMAN WAS STANDING, LEANING HIS BACK AGAINST THE POST IN SO NATURAL AN ATTITUDE THAT IT WAS HARD TO REALIZE THAT HE WAS NOT ALIVE."

the post in so natural an attitude that it was hard to realize that he was not alive, while at his feet there lay a ragged newsboy with his bundle of papers on the ground beside him. A paper-cart had got blocked in the crowd, and we could read in large letters, black upon yellow, "Scene at Lord's. County match interrupted." This must have been the earliest edition, for there were other placards bearing the legend, "Is it the End? Great Scientist's Warning." And another, "Is Challenger Justified? Ominous Rumours."

Challenger pointed the latter placard out to his wife, as it thrust itself like a banner above the throng. I could see him throw out his chest and stroke his beard as he looked at it. It pleased and flattered that complex mind to think that London had died with his name and his words still present in their thoughts. His feelings were so evident that they aroused the sardonic comment of his colleague.

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"In the limelight to the last, Challenger," he remarked.

"So it would appear," he answered, complacently. "Well," he added, as he looked down the long vista of the radiating streets, all silent and all choked up with death, "I really see no purpose to be served by our staying any longer in London. I suggest that we return at once to Rotherfield, and then take counsel as to how we shall most profitably employ the years which lie before us."

Only one other picture shall I give of the scenes which we carried back in our memories from the dead City. It is a glimpse which we had of the interior of the old church of St. Mary's, which is at the very point where our car was awaiting us. Picking our way among the prostrate figures upon the steps, we pushed open the swing door and entered. It was a wonderful sight. The church was crammed from end to end with kneeling figures in every posture of supplication and abasement. At the last dreadful moment, brought suddenly face to face with the realities of life, those terrific realities which hang over us even while we follow the shadows, the terrified people had rushed into those old City churches which for generations had hardly ever held a congregation. There they huddled as close as they could kneel, many of them in their agitation still wearing their hats, while above them in the pulpit a young man in lay dress had apparently been addressing them when he and they had been overwhelmed by the same fate. He lay now, like Punch in his booth, with his head and two limp arms hanging over the ledge of the pulpit. It was a nightmare, the grey, dusty church, the rows of agonized figures, the dimness and silence of it all. We moved about with hushed whispers, walking upon our tiptoes.

And then suddenly I had an idea. At one corner of the church, near the door, stood the ancient font, and behind it a deep recess in which there hung the ropes for the bellringers. Why should we not send a message out over London which would attract to us anyone who might still be alive? I ran across, and pulling at the list-covered rope I was surprised to find how difficult it was to swing the bell. Lord John had followed me.

"By George, young fellah!" said he, pulling off his coat. "You've hit on a dooced good notion. Give me a grip and we'll soon have a move on it."

But, even then, so heavy was the bell that it was not until Challenger and Summerlee had added their weight to ours that we heard the roaring and clanging above our heads which told us that the great clapper was ringing out its music. Far over dead London resounded our message of comradeship and hope to any fellow-man surviving. It cheered our own hearts, that strong, metallic call, and we turned the more earnestly to our work, dragged two feet off the earth with each upward jerk of the rope, but all straining together on the downward heave, Challenger the lowest of all, bending all his great strength to the task, and flopping up and down like a monstrous bull-frog, croaking with every pull. It was at that moment that an artist might have taken a picture of the four adventurers, the comrades of many strange perils in the past, whom Fate had now chosen for so supreme an experience. For half an hour we worked, the sweat dropping from our faces, our arms and backs aching with the exertion. Then we went out into the portico of the church, and looked eagerly up and down the silent, crowded streets. Not a sound, not a motion, in answer to our summons.

"It's no use. No one is left," I cried.

"We can do nothing more," said Mrs. Challenger. "For God's sake, George, let us get back to Rotherfield. Another hour of this dreadful, silent City would drive me mad."

We got into the car without another word. Lord John backed her round and turned her to the South. To us the chapter seemed closed. Little did we foresee the strange new chapter which was to open.

(To be concluded.)

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Balls Batsmen Do Not Like.



By J. B. HOBBS.

Illustrated by Chas. Grave.

THE balls batsmen do not like at the commencement of the season are so numerous and varied that a catalogue, instead of an article, could be filled with them. Bowling is then to the batsman the direct opposite of what the May-fly is to the trout-fisher. The eye, in a cricket sense, has been asleep all through the long winter months, and before it is wide enough awake to judge the flight of a ball at all well, the batsman often hears a sharp click behind which tells him in unmistakable fashion that the ball he thought was just off the wicket had its own views on the subject. Stiff joints, slow and slothful after months of inaction, also enter into the problem, and, aided and abetted by the as yet unready eye, make any passable bowling difficult and really good bowling practically unplayable. Then the bowler flourishes amazingly, especially if, as is so often the case, he is helped by a strong dash of what is Spring weather according to the calendar, but is really more suggestive of skating and hot chestnuts than cricket. Then wickets are cheap enough, and batsman after batsman looks in a puzzled sort of way at an imaginary spot on the pitch, takes a farewell glance at the scattered stumps behind him, and knows, to vary the words of the poet, "that the subsequent proceedings will interest him no more."

But batsmen soon find their normal form, and if the weather only behaves at all decently the balls batsmen do not like stand out clearly from the run of ordinary bowling.

I will commence with the insidious "lob," that interesting survival of the cricket of our forefathers. I have never seen or played against one of the real old "lobsters," so it is obviously impossible for me to say what modern batsmen would think of the trundling of a second Walter Humphries. But I do know that when Mr. Simpson-Hayward takes a turn with the ball and sends up that puzzling underhand stuff of his, he is not exactly beloved by a batsman who has played himself in and is collecting a nice lot of runs against orthodox bowling. Theoretically, a quick-footed batsman who can play back or forward with equal facility ought never to be in trouble against this underhand bowling. But in practice one finds that the sharp contrast in delivery and the number of tempting opportunities presented to "hit out and get out" make the wily lob-bowler a very real thorn in the side of a deserving batsman. Tired of making big hits all along the ground, only to see them always snapped up for singles by alert and well-placed fieldsmen, the batsman selects a promising "lob" or two and, possibly, clouts them for six apiece. Then he thinks he can hit them all "'ard, 'igh, an' often." When he is in this frame of mind a batsman is as clay in the hands of the lob-bowler, and

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"INGLORIOUSLY STUMPED YARDS OUT OF HIS GROUND."

is quite likely to dash out to the very next ball, miss it badly, and find himself ingloriously stumped yards out of his ground. It hurts a cricketer's pride to get out like this, and not all the sweet innocence of its languid and enticing flight will induce me to place the "lob" anywhere except in the category of balls batsmen do not like.

It may be going too far to say outright that any bowling which is mechanical is liked by batsmen, and that any bowling which is not mechanical is disliked by them. But this is true enough, in a general sense, as no matter how perfect the length and accuracy of bowling may be, the most such bowling can do in first-class cricket is to keep runs down. Not so the ball which has brains as well as muscle behind it, as this type of ball keeps the batsman playing strenuously all the time; and one never feels really at home against it. Colin Blythe excels in this clever phase of our national game. He adapts his bowling with wonderful skill to the known characteristics of individual batsmen, and often gets the best of wickets on pitches where a slow left-hander ought to be knocked all over the place.

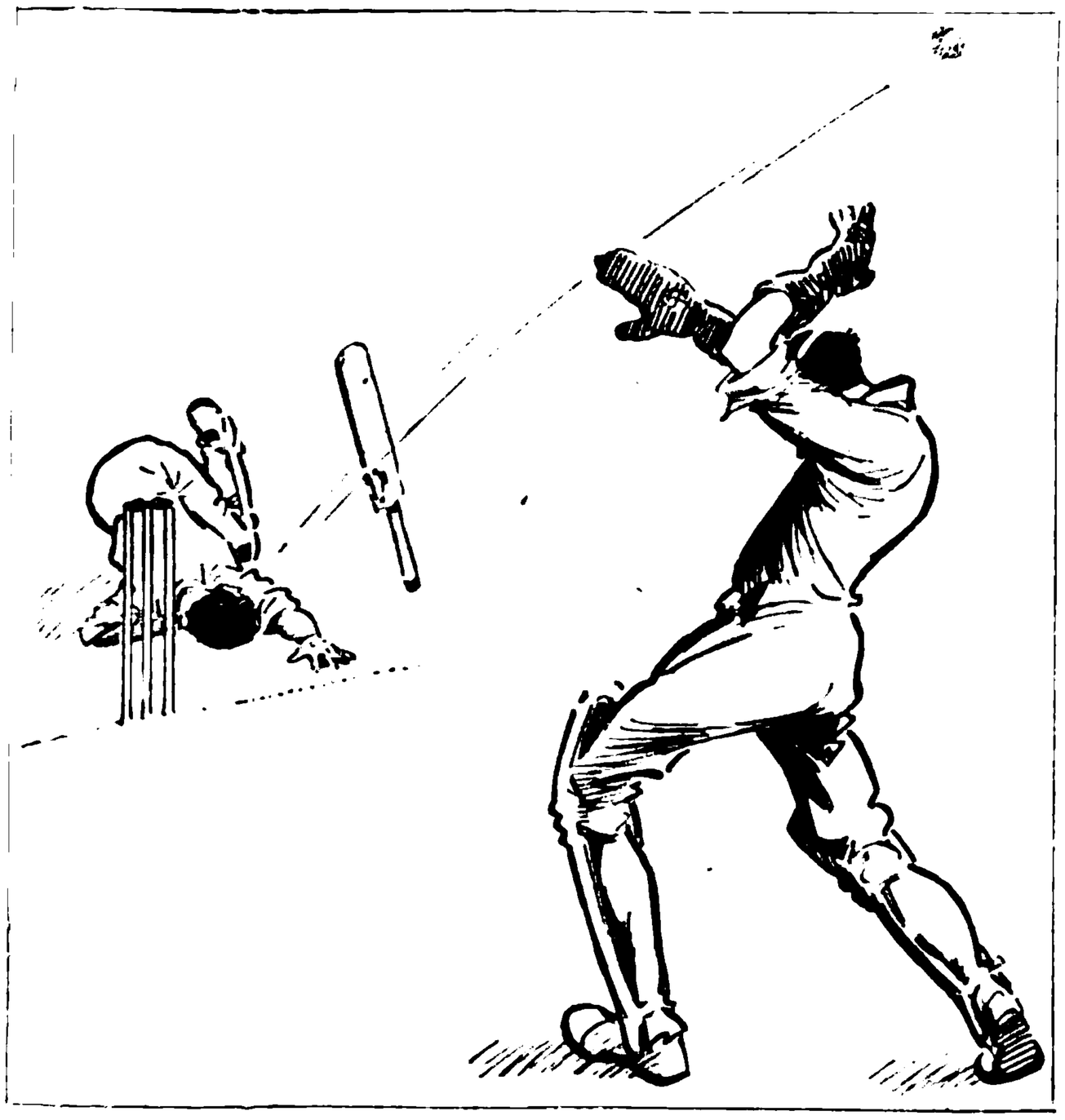
All these brainy slow bowlers are addicted to the, to my mind, extremely reprehensible habit of tying batsmen up in knots. Every ball they bowl has a plot behind it. The batsman can only wait and watch each ball with care and vigilance, playing most of them with an amount of caution which appears simply ridiculous from the pavilion, and thanking his lucky stars if he is able to help himself to a safe single or couple every now and then. After a spell of this cricket "patience," the wily slow bowler is fully capable of bowling the bad ball on purpose. Quite unexpectedly he presents the worried batsmen with an ideal ball to hit, and has a man on the boundary to save the four if the stroke is a safe one, or to make the catch if the batsman has a hefty "dip" which just fails to drop the leather among the spectators.

So far, however, we have kept clear of the ball which a batsman has the best of personal reasons for disliking, and which, whatever else it may be, is most decidedly not on the slow side. A fast, erratic bowler on a fiery pitch is the most cordially disliked bowler known to cricketers as a whole, and for very good and sufficient reasons. Some of his balls take wickets, others take teeth, trim eyebrows, clip ears, dent shins, split fingers, smash nails, and leave black-and-blue imprints on all parts of the human form divine. It is all very well to talk about hitting this sort of stuff; the trouble is that the ball is so often first with the hit. Then the bowler says, "Sorry, old chap," while the stricken batsman is wondering in a dim sort of way whether the bowler means to bowl him out or knock him out. Soon afterwards the groggy batsman sees a spurt of dust somewhere about half-way down the pitch, and then stars,



"CAUTION WHICH APPEARS SIMPLY RIDICULOUS."

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"A FAST, ERRATIC BOWLER ON A FIERY PITCH IS MOST CORDIALLY DISLIKED."

many, many stars, while a noise like a motor throbbing in his head completely drowns the "Very sorry, old chap" from the bowler. Balls like these are not liked, but I fancy the most hated one of all is not the whizzing rocketer which flies around the devoted head of the man with the willow. Such a ball, pitched short, gives a batsman time to avoid its onslaught. But the real villain of the piece is the very fast ball, which rears up as a man plays forward to it, or even attempts to drive if it is a little over-pitched. Then one gets a species of cannon effect off the bat up into the





"THE GROGGY BATSMAN SEES A SPURT OF DUST."

face, sometimes under the jaw, and if there is a more cordially-detested ball than this in the game of cricket I have never heard of it.

Turning to orthodox fast bowling, I may say at once that any really fast ball which breaks a little is not liked by a batsman, and a fast ball which breaks more than a little is only liked by the batsman who is getting tired and does not want to bother the scorer any longer. That unplayable one which pitches on the leg stump and goes with the bowler's arm a little is, however, the worst of all, and any batsman who manages to scrape such a ball off his wicket is entitled to congratulate himself. Sheer pace, too, enters into the argument. A very fast ball from a very fast bowler—mark the two "verys"—even if perfectly straight, of irreproachable length, and guiltless of the least sign of break, is a mortal enemy to any batsman. But the pace must be terrific for this to be true on a perfect pitch, and my experience is that



"SORRY, OLD CHAP."

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a ball of this type is extremely rare—perhaps the most rare in first-class cricket. A fast bowler who has a knack of popping in these balls which exceed the speed limit even for fast bowling is a good man to have on your side, but he is a nasty person to bat against.



"A SPECIES OF CANNON EFFECT OFF THE BAT UP INTO THE FACE."

Yorkers may be either fast or not, but whenever met with they are troublesome. Some bowlers have mastered the art of delivering a yorker during a batsman's first over, which is not kind of them. It is very necessary indeed for a batsman to watch most carefully the pitch of the first few balls he receives, and he does not like it a bit if he has to face a ball which drops close to where he grounds his bat. It is most inconsiderate to bowl such a ball before a batsman has begun to get his eye in, and the offence is aggravated if the pace is varied without any warning change in the action of the bowler. Such an unexpected yorker delivered fairly fast by a bowler whose normal pace is slow or medium is not good at any time, but it is a wicked thing to do early in an innings. It is one of the most effective methods of spoiling a potential century known in cricket, and is a ball I shall place on my batsman's black list without the least compunction. While I am about it I may as well include in the same category all balls delivered with intent to deceive by concealed alterations in pace. As a matter of fact, however, there are few bowlers who can make an appreciable change in the pace of a ball without giving the batsman some inkling of what to expect; but there are many I could name who vary their pace quite enough to bother a batsman without any apparent change in their run or delivery.

The ball that shoots is hated, of course, but does not demand serious attention, as it is never seen on a first-class pitch, and the batsman who loses his wicket on his native village green to a "shooter" which did not rise an inch after it pitched has my sincere sympathy. The mere idea of such a bowler makes me feel distinctly uncomfortable, yet thousands of brave and hardy "half-day cricketers" face the "shooter" without a qualm. They also face other weird and wonderful balls which owe their effect to a rough-and-ready playing pitch, and I am sure that these bold batsmen are entitled to more credit than they get.



"'HALF-DAY CRICKETERS' FACE THE 'SHOOTER' WITHOUT A QUALM."

But I am digressing from my subject, so will make a quick return with the assistance of the "googlie." Here we have a ball of comparatively recent introduction which is thoroughly disliked by most batsmen. How far is this feeling due to the inherent difficulty of the "googlie"? Let us see what the ball is like. It may fairly be defined as a ball delivered in such a way that it may break in either direction without any change in the bowler's action. It would be better to say any perceptible change, and best of all to say any change perceptible to some batsmen. Personally, I can nearly always tell which way a "googlie" will break from the moment

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the ball leaves the hand of a bowler. The ball then becomes just an ordinary break ball, and can be dealt with accordingly. It can often be punished severely, as length is so frequently sacrificed to obtain the "googlie" effect. Dr. Hordern, the famous Australian bowler, keeps the most consistent length with his "googlies" I have ever seen, and his action is also very baffling.

As things go in cricket the "googlie" is quite a novelty. Plenty of capable club cricketers have never faced a real "googlie" in their lives, and the "googlie" bowlers now playing in county cricket could be numbered easily on the fingers of one hand. It follows that a man concludes he has something new and wonderful to contend with when called upon to bat against a "googlie" bowler, and as confidence means so much to a batsman, he is half out before he takes his guard. The other half of him is very soon accounted for when he begins to worry about which way the ball will break, and the "googlie" claims yet another victim. Why? To my mind, merely on account of the terrors associated with its name, and to a certain extent on account of its novelty. When "googlie" bowling becomes more general, as I suppose it will, we shall have a better opportunity of judging it on its real merits. At present, although batsmen hate the stuff, I really think they are unduly prejudiced on the point. If they leave off worrying about what may be "on" the ball, and treat that as an unknown quantity until the ball pitches, or practice enables them to make correct forecasts from the bowler's action, they have more than half solved the problem of the "googlie." At first, most decidedly, they should rely exclusively on watching the ball from the pitch, and they must decide before the ball pitches whether the length calls upon them to go out and smother the ball by forward play, or stay at home, play back, and watch the ball up to the last fraction of time allowed.



"HALF OUT BEFORE HE TAKES HIS GUARD."

From "googlies" to "swervers" is an easy and natural transition, as both balls are modern, and have been evolved mainly with the idea of providing effective variations from orthodox bowling for use on perfect pitches. There is the additional point of resemblance that the action of the bowler is in each case calculated to deceive, but in this respect the "swerver" is much more effective than the "googlie." No batsman can tell from the bowler's action which way a ball is likely to swerve, and, to be strictly accurate, many bowlers do not know themselves whether the ball will swerve in from the off or from the leg—the trundlers who can make a ball swerve at will in either direction are very few and far between. An expert eye can often see all there is in a "googlie," but the "swerver" defies anticipation, frequently, as already remarked, by the man who bowls it. But when the conditions are on the side of the trundler and enable him to make a ball swerve considerably, then I have no occasion to think twice about writing down the swerving ball as one which batsmen do not like.



"NO BATSMAN CAN TELL FROM THE BOWLER'S ACTION WHICH WAY A BALL IS LIKELY TO SWERVE."

A batsman has quite enough on his mind without the added worry of bothering about a ball which comes at him more or less like a boomerang, although, in my opinion, the extreme "swerver" is not the most

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dangerous of the tribe. The one that swerves a little, just when you least expect it, is the ball batsmen have no use whatever for. The decided "swerver" is puzzling and a nuisance, but is apt to defeat itself by its own magnitude. Yet whether a ball swerves little or much, it requires watching with extreme care. You want to see the willow meet the leather every time when a gentleman is serving up a selection of "swervers," for it is so easy and fatal to hit where the ball is not when coping with this elusive specimen of the bowler's cunning. There is always the consolation, however, that the many imperfectly-understood factors mixed up with the gentle art of swerving are not unlikely to work out in favour of the batsman at times, with the joyful result that a ball devised to dive and twist in unholy fashion proves to be a nice friendly ball, which goes pop to the boundary, where all good balls—batsman's good balls—go with docile celerity. The proportion of such balls among "swervers" is by no means insignificant, even when bowlers who *can* make a ball swerve are operating with the leather, and if the digression is pardonable, I should like to submit this point to the careful consideration of young bowlers who may be languishing under an attack of "swerve" on the brain.



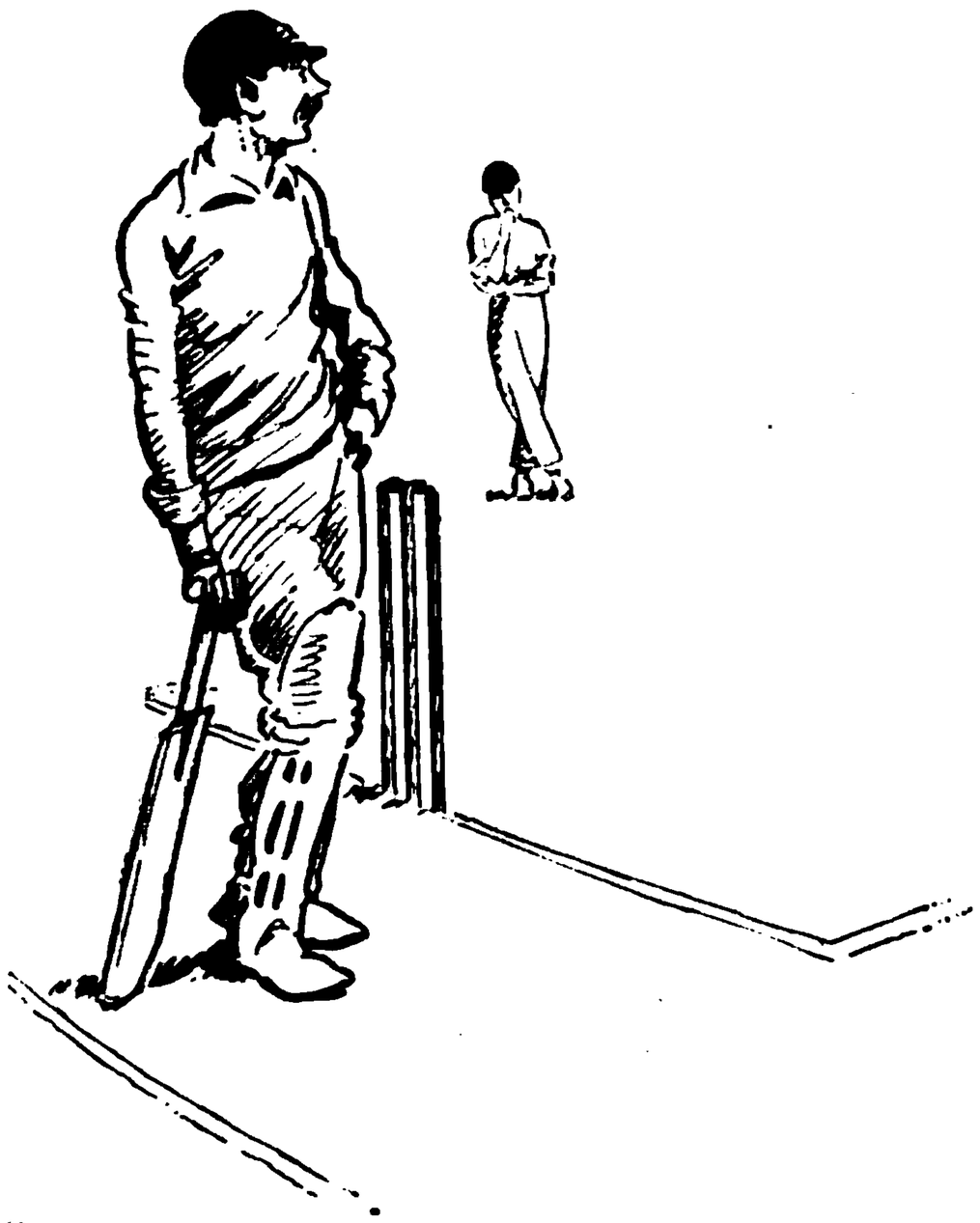
"ANGRY CRIES OF 'BOWL AT THE WICKET' FROM DISGUSTED SPECTATORS."

Sometimes a batsman is subjected to a succession of similar balls, not dangerous or troublesome individually, but which are intended to have a culminative and collective effect by no means to the liking of a batsman. What is well known as the "off theory" is the oldest example of the kind, but it is almost played out by now, and is no longer resorted to systematically in first-class cricket. An occasional spell of it may be tried with the idea of trapping a batsman who is well set, but modern, quick-footed batsmen have developed too many punishing strokes for the "off theory" to prosper. There is no risk in leaving the dangerous ones alone, and when the right one to hit comes along, a first-class bat has such a variety of strokes at his command that he can often place the leather hard, low, and true, clean through the carefully-arranged fieldsmen and away to the boundary.

Even the veriest tyro can indulge in a policy of masterly inactivity which reduces bowling on the "off theory" to a farce, for if the batsman simply refuses to "nibble at" anything pitched outside his off stump the bowler must adopt some other method of attack, or he will never get his man out. Altogether, this type of bowling is so tedious and trying to a batsman's patience that few have the temperament which enables them to do anything except dislike it. The crowd, too, thoroughly dislikes trundling which really amounts to nothing more than a test of patience between batsman and bowler, and it cannot be good for the game when, instead of runs mounting up and wickets tumbling down in healthy, exciting sequence, we hear angry cries of "Bowl at the wicket" from disgustedspectators.

The same is even more true of the "leg theory," an Australian invention. My opinion is that the "leg theory," as seen when a bowler of the calibre of Armstrong is exploiting it, backed by such grand fieldsmen as he has at his disposal, simply kills cricket. The point is that no batsman can hit with such accuracy and judgment on the leg-side that he dare take liberties with a succession of balls pitched up to leg with the idea of tempting him. His leg-side is his "blind side" to an extent which renders it impossible for him to attempt to score unless he is prepared to take an altogether undue risk of losing his wicket. Consequently, he simply stands bat in hand and looks idly on while ball after ball goes by outside his leg stump into the wicket-keeper's hands. He can do this for a month without the least

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"HE LOOKS IDLY ON WHILE BALL AFTER BALL GOES BY OUTSIDE HIS LEG STUMP INTO THE WICKET-KEEPER'S HANDS."

fear of losing his wicket, and as he must be got out for the game to proceed, it simply means that the bowler is forced sooner or later to bowl at the sticks. The sooner the better, as, surely, there is no more unedifying spectacle in cricket than the sight of a batsman compelled to leave active participation in the game to the bowler and wicket-keeper. It makes a batsman feel that he has been forced into some strange new game which is not cricket when he has to behave in such a manner, and if only for this reason the "leg theory" must be judged guilty of providing an abundance of balls batsmen do not like.

It may sound odd for a batsman to complain about bowling which, if he is content to leave it severely alone, does not endanger his wicket in the least. But the complaint is, nevertheless, well founded, because every ball bowled at cricket should contain either potential runs or the possibility of taking a wicket. Many deliveries fall short of this ideal by accident, and this is all part of the game proper. But such is not the case when bowling is deliberately systematized with the idea of rendering it unsafe to touch, but quite safe if ignored. The doom of cricket is in sight when such a practice becomes at all common, and a batsman can hardly be expected to rejoice at the prospect, even if it does enable him to be "not out" as often as he pleases. It all comes to this—a batsman is entitled to resent bowling which is obviously planned with the set purpose of rendering run-getting too risky to be worth attempting, but which is quite unable to take a wicket on its merits. An occasional ball delivered to tempt a batsman is quite another matter—the trouble is when the thing is reduced to a system and carried to excess.



The ball which gets a batsman out "leg-before" is next on my list, and might have been dealt with earlier, for there can hardly be a ball more universally detested by batsmen as a whole. From a batsman's point of view the ball which should send the umpire's hand up for "l.-b.-w." is so seldom bowled that it amounts to a curiosity. What really happens is (again, mark you, from the batsman's view-point) that the umpire and the bowler are victims of a singular optical illusion extremely prevalent on cricket-grounds. It is most annoying to get a whack on the shins which causes more than a passing twinge, even through the best of pads, and to have the blow rubbed in by an adverse "l.-b.-w." decision. One would think



"THE UMPIRE AND THE BOWLER ARE VICTIMS OF AN OPTICAL ILLUSION."

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that the sight of a poor wretch dancing on one leg and apparently trying to nurse the other under his arm would soften the heart of the most unrepentant bowler.

But, no; it's "How's that?" and out you limp, an irate victim of one of the most unpleasant balls a batsman meets with during his career. Of course, you are not out—one never is under such circumstances; but you have to go, all the same. For an hour or so afterwards you answer all inquiries with a positive assertion that the ball really pitched somewhere in the next parish, and must have hit a brick or something to have broken in anywhere near the wicket. You feel better as the bruise heals, and in a day or two, on turning the matter over calmly in your mind, you remember that you did just step in front of your wicket a little, that the ball was too quick for your bat, and that, perhaps—yes, well, you might have been really out, after all.

"It pitched on the blind spot, and I never saw the ball," is a remark often heard when a batsman is unbuckling his pads in the pavilion. No doubt a batsman does not like this ball, but he must put up with it, as it is part of what I should call the mechanism of cricket. Every batsman has his "blind spot," but those who indulge in the old-fashioned long, forward lunges are particularly weak in this respect. Their style prevents them from obtaining the least sight of the ball when it pitches; what they really do is to push their bat forward in the direction where they hope the ball will be. On perfect pitches this works out well enough time after time, but it always means leaving something to chance which ought to be dealt with scientifically.



"YOU ANSWER ALL INQUIRIES WITH A POSITIVE ASSERTION THAT THE BALL REALLY PITCHED SOMEWHERE IN THE NEXT PARISH."

By judiciously mixing back and forward play a batsman can bring his "blind spot" to the verge of complete elimination, and thus remove a fruitful cause of balls batsmen do not like.



"I NEVER SAW THE BALL."

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FROM THE PIT.

By L. J. BEESTON.

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

I.

HE jumped off the motor-bus step in an uncertain, crude fashion which suggested unfamiliarity in that line of locomotion. His soft felt hat threatened to fall off, and he pressed it down over his forehead in an abrupt, almost fierce, manner. On the other side of the Tottenham Court Road was Store Street. He turned up that quiet thoroughfare and got into Gower Street. He ascended the stone steps before one of the tall houses and rang.

"My name is Hallas. A friend of mine—Mr. Marchmont—took a couple of furnished rooms——"

The landlady interrupted. "Oh, yes; this way, if you please."

At the same time she darted a keen glance at her new lodger. Some of her lodgers lifted their hats to her. This one didn't. She perceived, in that fleeting moment of examination, a white face, large and bony, a Roman nose, a heavy chin, deeply-set eyes. A face of a man of power, of force, and certainly on the safe side of thirty.

She led the way up one flight of carpeted stairs.

"This is the sitting-room, sir; and here is the bedroom. I understood Mr. Marchmont to say that you will be having your meals outside; but I can prepare you anything you wish."

She switched on the electric light in the sitting-room.

"Thank you," replied the other. "I will talk with you about that later."

The landlady accepted the inferred dismissal and went out, closing the door. This taking of rooms by one man for another was a little outside convention; but then Mr. Marchmont was of the best social standing, and a month's rent in advance is a splendid reference.

The new lodger stood perfectly still and rolled his eyeballs as if awaking from a dream, from a nightmare, from a mental horror. He drew a deep breath; he put up a hand to his collar, loosening the linen round his throat.

He had come to this room straight from prison.

Nearly two years had passed since he had received his sentence—since, with those words of doom stunning his brain, he had turned in the dock and descended those steps which went down into oblivion.

He flung his top-coat over a chair and then removed his hat. A mirror showed him the insult of his close-cropped head, and he stared at it, uttering a sound between a laugh and a sob.

"My things," he murmured, moving slowly round the room. "Marchmont must have stored them—or some of them. And he has had this place furnished with some of the property."

But that "some" was comparatively little, of course. One cannot crowd the contents of a luxurious Piccadilly flat into two rooms in Gower Street.

A change, indeed; but he reflected: "This time last evening I was in a cell. Seven feet by six was the measure of its limitation. I shall always see, until I die, the tiny deal table there, the hammock, the gas burning in a wire-guard. At this hour I was having supper—cocoa and stirabout. Heavens!"

He dropped into a divan chair by the fireplace and spread chilled fingers to the blaze. He muttered to himself continually—a habit he had acquired in those unnameable years.

So here he was again, in London, come out from the pit. What did he find still belonging to him? His name—Alfred St. John Hallas; better than a number, though stained with dishonour. And these remnants of his furniture. That was all. His friends he had lost; his position he could never regain.

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True, Marchmont had sent him that letter on the eve of leaving prison; the letter which told him where to go—to this place. Apparently Eyre Marchmont had not forgotten him, at any rate. And when he thought of Marchmont he thought of the Sabine Club, and wondered if he still belonged to that circle—one of the most exclusive, the most expensive, in the West-end.

But since he—Hallas—had dragged the name of the Sabine Club into the police news, perhaps a membership was no longer so coveted a distinction. His lips writhed in a bitter smile as he reflected on the stigma which his alleged crime had burned into the name of that most select coterie. The thing was so horribly banal, so villainously commonplace. He had been accused of picking a pocket! Yes, in bald terms, that was it. In the pocket was a pendant in the form of a Maltese cross, studded with gems: in the sable-trimmed overcoat belonging to a French Marquis. And while the French Marquis played for high stakes in the card-room he—Hallas—was supposed to have abstracted the trinket, worth, incidentally, a couple of thousand pounds.

If the Marquis had not lost a large sum, and his temper, at the table, he might have consented to the affair being hushed up. As it was, he gave a fellow-member in charge. The offence was proved home, and St. John Hallas went to jail.

What a scandal! A member of one of the most aristocratic clubs in London a thief! If the evicted member were to meet any of those one-time friends again icicles would compare unfavourably with the chill of the greeting. Or, rather, there would be no greeting at all; only a glance of detestation on one side, and on the other a furtive shrinking.

Hallas, thinking of these matters, wiped his sweating forehead. For two years he had been in the flame. He was out now, but scorched to the soul. With the possible exception of Marchmont, his only friends were the dumb ones on which his eyes rested: a bookcase filled with volumes—mostly poetry, anthologies. His pipe-rack was by the side of the mantel, with his favourite briars in the niches. The walls were covered with his pictures; his folding card-table was in a recess; his *bric-à-brac* everywhere; his piano in a corner. Certainly Marchmont had acted in a kindly fashion.

Good old Marchmont, who, at the trial, had backed the accused with all the weight of his influence—which was not much. Clearly Marchmont had believed in his friend's innocence. No doubt he had insisted upon it at the Sabine. In vain. Over the brink Hallas had gone; shut out in a terrible darkness; got rid of by society; his name a thing for shudders.

A jail-bird; a felon; a professional thief. And a member of the Sabine Club. Horrible paradox!

He was seized by a desire to go out. What did Piccadilly Circus look like? Any changes in Regent Street? How many new theatres had been built? The old enchantment called to him.

He groaned aloud, seeing the impossibility of it all. No doubt Marchmont had meant well and kindly; all the same he—Hallas—had been a fool to come here, so near to once-loved haunts which henceforth could only mock him. To remain near to them would be to invite insult, avoidings; at the best, pity.

He turned away, sick at heart, and caught sight of a box of cigars on the mantelpiece. A gift from Marchmont, doubtless. He bit the end off one and lighted up slowly. He drew three long, steady pulls. Perfect weeds, mellow, divine. And after those unspeakable years—what ecstasy!

Someone knocked at the door. Marchmont? No, his landlady, bearing a letter which had just arrived for her new lodger. He immediately recognized his friend Marchmont's writing. His fingers trembled as he opened the communication.

The sheet of paper was filled on both sides with writing. Encouragement, doubtless; exhortation to play the man, and so on. But when Hallas had read but two lines he stopped, amazed. These two lines ran:—

"Be at the Sabine Club to-morrow evening at half-past eight. I have something to say of the greatest importance——"

What form of insanity had gripped Marchmont? He—Hallas—invited to the club of all places on the wide earth! The landlady, midway down the stairs, stopped, startled by a loud laugh of biting irony.

II.

Soon after eight o'clock those members of the Sabine who almost always dined in the club's *salle-à-manger* drifted in couples into the smoking-room. At intervals they were joined by others who were not such regular *habitués*. The room, large though it was, became fairly full. None of those who entered went out again, so that the place began to

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"WHEN HALLAS HAD READ BUT TWO LINES HE STOPPED, AMAZED."

suggest a general meeting called for some special purpose.

This naturally elicited remarks, and the very surprising intelligence was spread that each man there had put in his appearance in response to a request from one of the members —Eyre Marchmont. This request had been couched in either written or verbal terms of earnest beseeching. It had been put as a great and personal favour.

Comments grew. A deep hum of conversation upon this somewhat astonishing occurrence.

"Quite extraordinary," observed white-haired General McMuller.

"And unconventional," replied his friend, Sir Peter Breves. "It is now a quarter past the hour, and Marchmont not appeared. I confess I do not like it. Savours of a hoax."

The General disagreed, though frowning. "No, no; he would not dare. By the way, you know that his Serene Highness Prince Osca has honoured us by accepting a life membership?"

Sir Peter nodded; then he looked up lazily at a dapper little figure, hands in trousers pockets, who was standing before them.

"I overheard your remark, General," said this third man. "It is all very fine, but we've a deuced lot of foreign blood in our body-corporate here. No doubt the Prince is a catch; but ever since our French Marquis had the doubtful taste to charge a fellow-member ——"

"Good heavens, Standreth!" remonstrated Sir Peter. "That affair is amongst the dead things. We have forgotten——"

"Gentlemen!" cried a loud voice.

It was heard by most of the smoking-room

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occupants, and after a "Hush!" from a few lips there fell a total silence.

Every eye was fixed upon the latest comer. He himself was watching two or three liveried servants gliding about with trays. He waited for them to go out. Then he shut the door and stood with his back to it.

He was a man of fine presence, with sparkling black eyes and a waxed moustache right across the width of his face. A lean man, dark, athletic. He was Eyre Marchmont.

He began in a tone so subdued that only those near to him heard the words:—

"I am aware that in asking you, in a somewhat surreptitious manner, to meet here this evening, I acted in a most unusual way, quite aside from our ordinary methods of procedure. But I have something of an extraordinary nature to communicate."

"Speak up!" interrupted two or three voices.

Having got so far, however, he seemed unable to speak at all. A flush had faded from his dark face, leaving it sallow, bloodless. He drew some deep breaths, craning his neck, clenching and unclenching his fists.

"I have chosen my own way of delivering to you a message which will, I fear, do more than merely startle you," he continued, gaining strength. "I implore you not to interrupt me, and to hear me to the end. May I count upon that?"

A voice broke a profound silence: "Why, certainly, Marchmont; you know you can. Out with it."

"I thank you. That is a promise of a fair hearing, and I rely upon it. I am going to speak of a matter which touches us all, though we have tried to forget it. Gentlemen, Alfred St. John Hallas was released from prison yesterday. Concerning him, I have a painful, a frightful duty to perform. I beg you to believe that what I am about to do is absolutely necessary."

The words were yet on his lips when he opened the door behind him. He stepped out.

"Now, by all that's——" said Sir Peter, in a menacing growl.

A profound stir interrupted him; a deep sensation.

Marchmont had returned, but not alone. His right hand gripped the arm of one who had not been seen in that room for two years; who, after one agonized look at the company, fixed his eyes upon the carpet, while his thin face flamed and whitened alternately under the stress of terrific emotion.

Several men started to their feet. Marchmont flung up a beseeching hand.

"I accept full responsibility for this," he cried. "I brought Hallas here; you can have him ejected—if you should want to—when you have heard me. I claim your promise. I swear to you that I will justify this procedure."

Standreth giggled in the General's ear: "Thank our lucky stars that his Illustrious Highness is not here just now!"

The General fumed. "A gross outrage!"

"I will justify it," continued Marchmont, when the preliminary buzz of excitement was over, "by two statements. The first is—Hallas was the victim of another's crime. I always maintained as much, but I was not believed. Yet you will believe me now, for I am going to tell you the name of the guilty man; and that is why I have brought Hallas here—to clear him in your sight. Who stole the Marquis's diamond pendant? I did!"

If the room had been utterly deserted a deeper silence could not have reigned there. Movement, speech, breathing almost, were killed by this astonishing outburst. Eyes which opened wider and wider were fixed upon the speaker, over whose haggard face passed a convulsion. He stepped back as if that dramatic declaration, shot from an overcharged heart, had brought about a physical recoil. The action released Hallas, who was stupefied, and who gazed at Marchmont with an indescribable expression.

The latter recovered himself with a palpable effort. He said, in a hoarse voice, which he strove in vain to control: "There, you know now—at last. Thank Heaven for it! You will condemn, spurn, loathe me, but it will not be worth the sense of relief which this confession has already given. For two years I have been haunted by my secret; it was slowly killing me. Hallas here has not endured, in prison, the gnaw of remorse which has made my life unendurable. I repeat, I stole the diamond pendant which the Marquis was taking that day to his wife.

"A few words will recall the facts to you. The owner of the jewel, after leaving the cardroom, was handed his coat by an attendant. At once he noticed his loss, which was considerable. He became excited. The attendant mentioned, somewhat reluctantly, that he had seen Hallas drawing on the overcoat a few minutes before, and that he had removed it, laughingly declaring that it greatly resembled his own, and that he had made a mistake. At once the Marquis concluded that Hallas had robbed him, because the latter

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"'I ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS,' HE CRIED. 'I BROUGHT HALLAS HERE.'"

had actually assisted him in the choosing of the jewel that morning. I knew that. The commissionaire had called a cab for Hallas, and heard the address given. The excited Marquis went in chase with a constable. Hallas was overtaken in his cab; was asked to turn out his pockets; and the pendant was found upon his person. He was instantly given in charge. The fact that he had known of the existence and whereabouts of the jewel, that he had been seen handling the coat, and that—most unfortunately for him—his financial affairs were shown to be at an extremely low ebb just then, condemned him. All the same, he was absolutely innocent. I did not know of the second piece of evidence, but I was acquainted with the first and third that I have named, and I knew that if the jewel was found upon him Hallas would be ruined. Who put it where it was discovered? I did. If you press me for a reason I shall be compelled to give it; but a lady's name is involved. Suffice it now for me to assert that Hallas was as guiltless of the abominable act attributed to him as he was incapable of dreaming of such a thing. Under the mask of friendship I wished to blast him. I might have hesitated had I known what would have happened. His expulsion from the club was my principal idea.

"You know now why I stood up for him at the time. He went to jail, into utter ruin. On a score of occasions I was nearly confessing, but cowardice prevailed. That is all

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"HALLAS LEAPED AT HIS THROAT."

over now. I brought him here that he might face you as a clean, a white man; and that I might make my confession standing up.

"Do with me as you choose. I won't whine for mercy. But one thing I must do: I have ruined the prospects of the man who called me his friend, and such reparation as I can perform in that way I will carry out to the best of my ability. I am at least a wealthy man. If money can remedy, in the smallest fashion, the deadly injury I have done, here is my cheque drawn to the amount of five thousand pounds. I will double—treble it, if you ask me. I have no more to say."

His voice died away in a husky whisper. With a hand that trembled as a leaf he reached out and placed the cheque on one of the green-tiled tables; but scarcely had it

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fluttered from his fingers when, with the snarl of a wounded animal, Hallas leaped at his throat.

It was so sure and sudden a thing that not one of the dumbfounded audience had time to prevent it. The grip held good and true. Both men rolled over and over, upsetting the tables, fighting in the maddest way. A scene of great confusion ensued. Sir Peter flew to the door, retaining presence of mind enough to realize the importance of keeping out the servants.

Hallas was torn from his victim. Livid, excited in every palpitating nerve, he could scarcely stand.

Marchmont was assisted to his feet. His collar was gone and his dress-coat ripped clean up the back. He glared round with eyes blazing with fright.

"By Heaven, he wanted to kill me!" he panted.

"Of course he did," said General McMuller, the coolest there. "I have a similar itching at my finger-ends. The best thing you can do is to get out—quick!"

"I'm going," gasped Marchmont, fighting for breath, feeling his throat. "I sha'n't run away. You know where—where the police will find me."

No one tried to stop him.

Hallas, that fierce outbreak of passion past, was supported by the arms of two of the members. They helped him into a chair. He put his arms on a table before it, buried his face, and commenced to sob in a dry, husky, terrible manner.

Standreth muttered: "Poor, poor devil!"

The members looked at one another. No need to exchange thoughts audibly, for each had the same. What a horrible scandal, this! The first had been bad enough; but the present development was infinitely worse.

Hallas lifted a haggard face and perceived only kind eyes regarding him. He looked ashamed, and blurted: "A dashed fool—making this exhibition of myself—so sorry——"

"That's all right," said Sir Peter, gently. "As right as rain. Don't you worry."

"Has he gone?"

"Marchmont? Yes."

"Ah! What ought I to do about it?" asked Hallas, wearily.

"Clear your name, first thing."

"I seem to be dreaming. Marchmont did that? My soul! There was no finer fellow. The very last man in the world! I'd like to spare him, even now, for his sake and—and yours; but I should have to go away and bury myself in some dark hole at the other end of the world. Ah, those fearful years! And now—now——"

A groan ended the sentence.

General McMuller murmured to a sympathetic ear: "If this disgrace could only be got over——"

"Impossible."

Sir Peter Breves went to the fireplace and took up the tongs. Every eye watched him curiously. He walked to where Marchmont's cheque had fluttered to the carpet, and he scraped up the slip of paper with the fire implement; then he held it out to Hallas.

Amid a breathless silence the latter took the cheque for five thousand pounds and tore it across and across.

"As was only," murmured Standreth, cryptically.

Sir Peter smiled grim approval. He stepped aside, motioning to others. He whispered to this group: "Fortunately, I always carry in my letter-case a blank cheque, for emergencies. This is an emergency. I suggest that I fill up a cheque for that other five thousand so properly treated as dirt. I think that possibly we may consider that we owe it to poor Hallas. We can afterwards make it up between ourselves."

There were not wanting many murmurs of appreciative assent.

"Understand, I am not hinting at buying his silence. That would be preposterous. On the other hand, he might show an unusual mercy for Marchmont. Wildly improbable; but you heard what he said. At any rate, we will combine in this way to offer him a substantial token of profound sympathy and unshaken regard."

In one of the many excellent and astonishingly reasonable-priced restaurants in the Soho region, on the Thursday following the return of St. John Hallas, sat General McMuller and his friend Sir Peter Breves partaking of roast quails to the melody of a bottle of Burgundy.

Into this restaurant came Standreth, unexpectedly. A glance showed him his two friends. He pulled up a chair at their table, ordered another bottle, and lighted a cigarette slowly. Then he said:—

"I hope you have had a very good lunch?"

"You haven't come here to ask us that," grunted the General, behind tobacco smoke.

"True; but I allowed you this blissful hour before coming. Marchmont is out of the country."

"That is nothing fresh," said Sir Peter.

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"HE SCRAPED UP THE SLIP OF PAPER WITH THE FIRE IMPLEMENT, THEN HELD IT OUT TO HALLAS."

"And Hallas."

"I am glad of it."

"They were seen in Paris, at the Gare du Nord, by Fletcher."

The General removed his cigar as if to stare harder.

"In the buffet, at the Gare."

"Not together?" Sir Peter's lips, having framed the question, remained wide open.

"Hallas was one side of a table, Marchmont the other. Dining; and chatting; and laughing at some enormous joke."

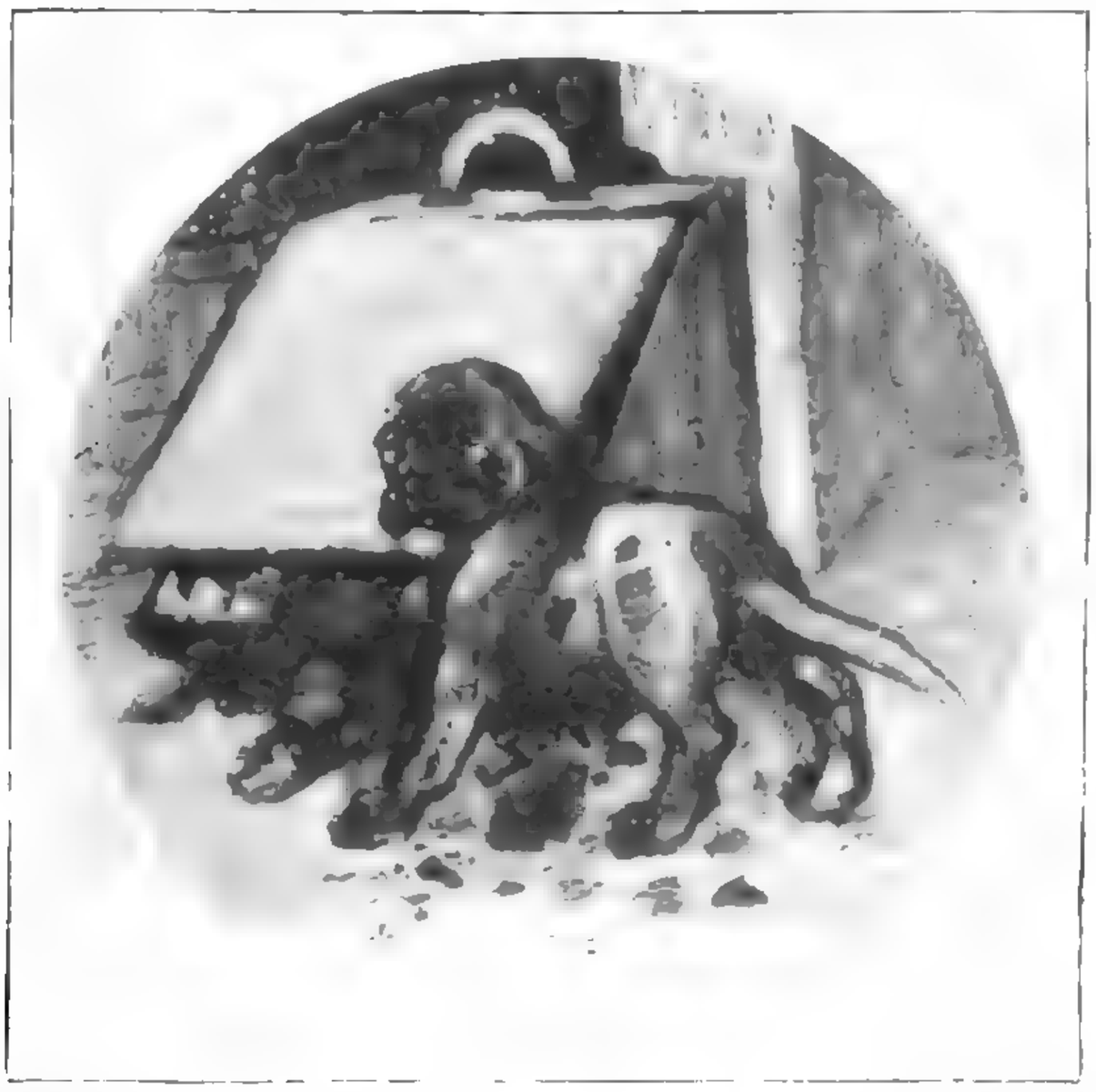
The General knocked over the bottle.

Sir Peter snatched it up and smashed it down upon the table with a fury that effectually drowned the worst oath he had ever used.

Standreth pressed the ash gently from his cigarette. "An enormous joke," he repeated, thoughtfully. "Possibly the humour of it will extend to us—later. Gentlemen thieves. Of the very first water. Hallas stole that diamond pendant, after all. Marchmont doubtless helped him. That plot failed, and Hallas bore the brunt. He came out. Marchmont had something better. That scene at the club: a dramatic little play arranged between them for their exclusive benefit. Both presumably were in a low state financially. Marchmont's cheque worthless paper. Five thousand pounds of our money divided between two means just two thousand five hundred apiece. What? Do try these cigarettes, which possess an exceptionally soothing aroma."

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The Dog Who Wasn't



What He Thought He Was.

By WALTER EMANUEL.

Illustrated by Ernest A. Aris.

MONDAY.

THIS has been a great day for me. I have left my mother, and have taken a situation. My master is an ugly little fellow named Pretyman. In spite of his conceit, he seems a bit of a fool. Nor has his wife, who is not a bad-looking woman, many brains, I should say. They have a baby—a hideous lump of lard named Chicky. He is aged about a year and a half, and is a bachelor, I believe. Apparently I am to be companion to this. It is not much of a career for me, and whether I shall be able to consort with one who is so immeasurably my intellectual inferior remains to be seen. Besides, now that they have a nice little dog I do not see that they need a baby. They live in a flat, but I should say they are fairly well-to-do. I am not quite sure whether Mr. Pretyman is a gentleman, or whether he earns his living. They have provided a rather handsome kennel for me at the end of a long passage. It seems queer to have a house within a house, but I am glad to have it, as it gives one the landed proprietor feeling somehow. I daresay I shall be all right here. It is a great thing to be independent at last, and to be free of my fussy old mother and her eternal lectures. Dog-tired after my journey from the country, I slept like a top as soon as I turned in.

TUESDAY.

Things do not look quite so bright to-day. My kennel, on a more careful inspection, turns out to be a cheap, jerry-built affair. It has no door which I can lock up when I go out—no security whatever, in fact, against dishonest persons. Then my master has given me the absurd name of Gibus, because, he says, my face reminds him of his opera hat when it is shut up. I only know one name more absurd, and that is Chicky. Which reminds me that it is pretty evident that I am intended to play second fiddle to that brat, and I don't intend to do it. Lastly, these ignorant Pretymans don't even know what sort of a dog I am. They were discussing it at breakfast. "I wonder what he is?" said Mrs. P.

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"Yes, I wonder," said Mr. P. "I must find out. Anyhow, it was very kind of Uncle John to give him to us." Imagine their not knowing what I am! And the annoying part of it is that I don't know myself. My mother allowed me to go out into the world without telling me this. I suppose she knew—though I often surprised her staring at me in a puzzled way. I was one of eleven, and every one of us different. My dear mother was very versatile.

After breakfast my mistress took me out for my first walk in town. It seems a terrific place. Some of the streets are chock-full of dog-killing vehicles which seem to be shot from catapults. However, they missed me every time. I was pleased to see what extreme care my mistress took of me crossing the road. It showed that she, anyhow, had an idea of my value. We went part of the way in an omnibus, my mistress placing me inside her muff, on her lap, with my head just peeping out. This was rather *infra dig.*, but very comfy. By the by, I was highly amused at a short-sighted old lady opposite who kept staring at me until I thought her little peepers would jump out of her head. Finally she said, "Well, lawks-a-daisy me, I've never seen a dog like that before! What a tiny head for such an enormous body!" Ultimately we came to a place they call the Park. This was a bit of all right. It had evidently been constructed especially for dogs, and no vehicles were allowed inside, and it was just like the country. It was ripping there, and I scampered and ran about so much that my mistress had the greatest difficulty in keeping up with me at times, especially when I raced with other dogs. Evidently she has not had much training in learning to follow. I did not find the town dogs anything like so stand-offish as I had expected. Lots of them talked to me and proposed games of touch-last, and so forth, especially great big dogs, which pleased me. Many of the small dogs were, frankly, jealous little beasts, and made nasty personal remarks about me, such as "Who sat on your face?" or "Who's been putting his nose in the ink-pot?" Though boiling over with indignation, I treated these with silent contempt, but when one or two of the catty little things actually snapped at me I did not know what to do, and I would run to my mistress and she would take me up and, to my huge delight, give the little bullies a sound rap on the nose with her sunshade, and then they would run off yelping.

By the way, one of the big dogs who talked to me asked me what I was. I said I was ashamed to say I did not know. "Are you a thoroughbred?" he said. "Of course," I answered. "Open your mouth and say 'Ah!'" he said. I did so, and he said, "No, you're a very nice little fellow, but you ain't a thoroughbred. Thoroughbreds have black roofs to their mouths." "Where can I get one?" I asked. "Oh, you can only get one from your mother," he said. This rather upset me, as now that I had left home I did not want to be beholden to my mother for anything, and I decided that I would die rather than go begging to her. On my way back I felt very tired, and finally sat down and refused to go a step farther. After dragging me a little by the lead in a sitting down position, my mistress decided that she would have to carry me, and as my feet were muddy she was quite angry about this. Which shows what unreasonable creatures women are, for it was she who had made me tired by taking me too far.

In the afternoon a happy thought struck me. I would become a thoroughbred without troubling my mother. I was alone in the library, and it was the sight of the coal-box that put the idea into my head—and thence into my mouth. Towards the close of the banquet my master suddenly came into the room. "Oh, you bad dog!" he cried. "How dare you? And with coal the price it is! If I catch you doing this again I'll beat you within half an inch of your life!" Then he seemed ashamed of his cowardly threat, and said, "One does not eat coal, you know." This was a lie, for I had heard his wife asking him only the night before for the address of the Coal Consumers' Association. However, I was not inclined to argue with one who does not know how to control his temper, so I let the matter drop. After all, if he likes to have a dog who is not a thoroughbred, that's his affair. I shall eat no more of his coal. He also said if I did not follow better—he was referring, I suppose, to his wife having to carry me—he would have to glue each of my paws on to a wooden stand with wheels, and I should be dragged through the streets like a toy. Silly ass!

I had rather a lark with him later on. I woke up in the middle of the night, feeling somewhat lone and lorn and miserable, and wondering what mother was doing; so I gave a howl. I rather liked the sound of it—it sounded important, and was, so to say, company for me, so I gave another, and then a whole series of them. After a time this brought Mr. Pretyman along, looking an

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"THEY ALL CAME DOWN LIKE SNOW."

absurd sight in pyjamas, with a candle. He tried being sort of funny at first. "Halloa!" he says. "Coals not agreeing with us? Dear, dear! Sh-h! Small people, you know, ought to be seen and not heard." I felt inclined to say, "What about that beastly baby of yours which is crying all day?" but I kept on howling instead. Then he tried being tender. "Now, go to sleep, there's a good Gibus, do." But still I howled. Then he raised his hand as though to beat me, but refrained on my growling as well as howling. "I can't stop him," he cried, helplessly, to his wife. "Try giving him a lump of sugar," she said. He went and fetched some sugar. I love sugar. He gave me a lump. "Now, you really must be quiet," he said, "or we shall have the people upstairs and downstairs complaining." I quite saw the importance to him of my being quiet—and, as I have said, I love sugar. So I went on howling. He gave me a second lump. I ate it and continued to howl. When he gave me a third lump I decided that that would do for to-night, and became a good Gibus. Good biz!

WEDNESDAY.

This has been the day of my life. First I went into my mistress's boudoir and destroyed two extremely pretty cushions.

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It was grand the mess I made with all the feathers. Then I visited my master's library, and crippled his favourite pipe and tore up a number of letters into thousands of fragments. It was such a pretty effect when I nozzled these up into the air and they all came down like snow. Next I thought of that baby. Why the dickens should he be "Master" Chicky and I plain Gibus? The nursery door chanced to be open, and the brat was alone for once. The miserable quadruped was crawling about the floor with a rattle in his hand and making a stupid crooning noise. He stopped his crooning on catching sight of me and stared at me in the rudest way, not even having the common courtesy to pass the time of day to me. Then a broad smile appeared on his ugly face, as though he had never seen such a funny sight as me. At this insult, although he was considerably my senior, I closed with him, and, wrenching his beastly rattle from him, bit it through and through. At this Master Chicky raises such a hullabaloo—never in my life have I heard such yells—that the nurse and his mother come rushing in and make ever such a fuss of the little coward, while I, if you please, am ordered to be beaten! I can quite see that either I or the lump of lard will have to leave soon. So Mr. Pretyman—to whom, meanwhile, one of the servants had sneaked about the cushions and his pipe and the letters—is fetched with a whip, and the bullying father of a cowardly son gives me a thrashing which really hurts. After that I retired to my kennel and sulked, and reflected what a rotten thing life was; thoughts of suicide even entered my mind, and I would have awfully liked to see mother again.

After lunch I felt a bit brighter.

And now for the great and glorious tidings. I have found out what I am. *I am a bloodhound!*

This is how I found out. I was lying down in the library after lunch, half-inclined, after all, to renounce my renunciation of coal, when some unaccountable impulse made me look up at the pictures on the wall. They were rather a mixed lot. Some of them good, others, I should say, wedding presents. Suddenly my eye alighted on one which made me start. It was called "The Bloodhound—After Landseer." *It was me grown-up!* The brow a little nobler, perhaps, the forehead rather more wrinkled, the ears somewhat fuller, the nose a bit longer—but all that would come with time. I was wildly excited. It seemed incredible. I rushed to my mistress's bedroom; fortunately the door was ajar, and I nozzled my way in and looked in the big glass again. There was no doubt about it. A bloodhound! Oh, it was grand—too grand for words!

What a difference it makes to my life having a future. I feel that nothing will ever make me lose my temper again. Why, I even found myself disliking the baby less. Indeed, I began to feel quite sorry for him, for *he* could never be a bloodhound, poor little fellow!

Oh, it's splendid, splendid, splendid!

When my people came in they could not understand why I gave them such a nice greeting. "Been up to some more mischief, I expect," said my clever master. I did all I could to explain to them that they were entertaining a bloodhound unawares. I kept gazing at the picture and wagging my tail; but all they said was, "Look at him staring at that print of Landseer's; it's like 'Dignity and Impudence,' isn't it?"

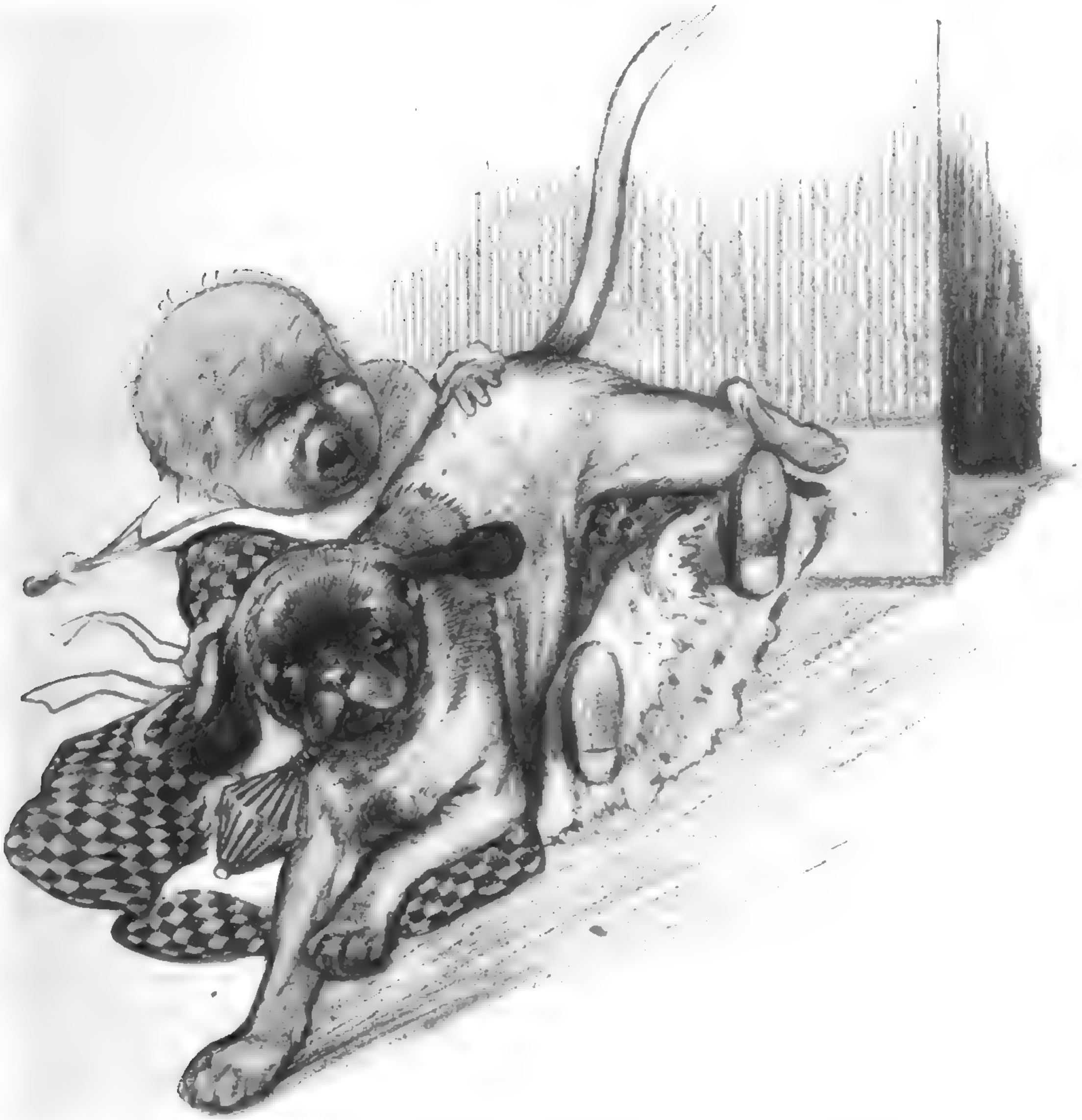
Blind fools! As a matter of fact, there was nothing impudent about the dog in the picture. However, I did not say anything. Only I did make this resolve: that when I was grown up, if Mr. Pretyman dared to try and beat me, I would take him in my mouth and shake him like a rat. Also I should refuse to answer to the name of Gibus.

It had been my intention to-night to have further voice trials, and to blackmail the little man to the extent of six lumps of sugar, but in the circumstances I refrained. As a matter of fact, I was so happy that I slept without waking till the maid called me in the morning.

THURSDAY.

A glorious day, in keeping with my spirits. My mistress announces after breakfast that she intends to take me into the Park again. She is, after all, rather a dear, I think. It was good to get out into the open once more. Evidently my news has not leaked out yet, for not a hundred yards from my house I saw a tiny kitten, about half my size, sunning herself at the top of the area steps. For fun I pretended to make for her, expecting her either to fall down in a palsy or to run shrieking indoors. Instead of this, the impudent little baggage refused to budge an inch, but arched her back and actually spat at me. At that, after noting the address, I left the little fury with the words, "One day, my lady, you shall know whom you have insulted!" Not that I really minded, only I had to say something. It was perfectly ripping in the Park. I met most of my big dog friends,

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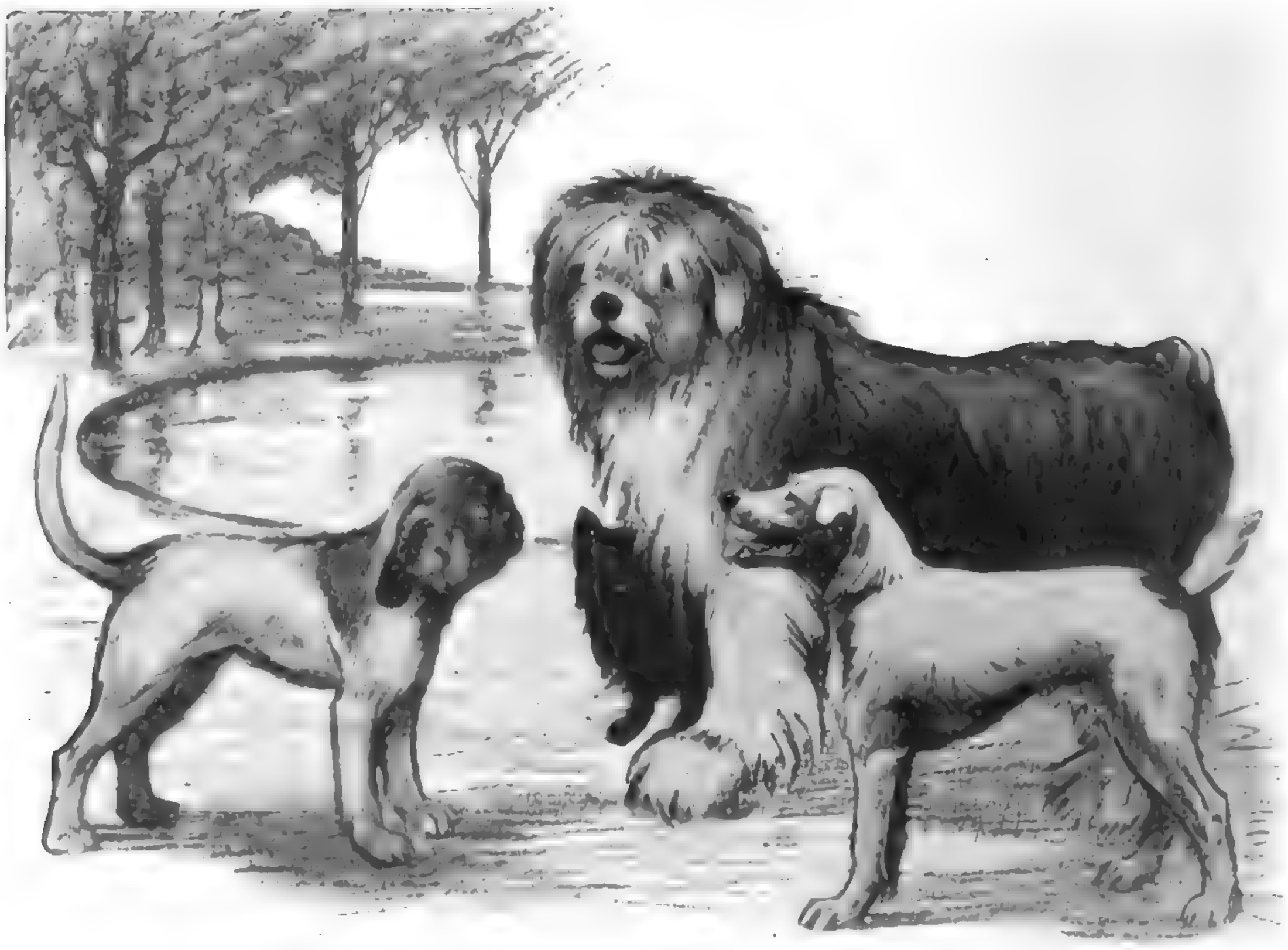
"I CLOSED WITH HIM AND WRENCHED HIS BEASTLY RATTLE FROM HIM."

and they were as chummy as ever, and all smiles when I told them my great news. And what was so nice was that I no longer felt that these big chaps were patronising me, but that I was now their equal. The thought was most bracing. I even made a joke with one great, springy fellow, who looked as if he was dressed in ill-fitting black trousers. He came bounding up to me. "Halloa!" I said. "What are you?" "I'm a bob-tailed sheep-dog, ignoramus," he said. "What!" I said. "Surely you never gave a bob for that little, tiny stump of a tail?" "And, pray, what are you?" he asked, without relaxing a muscle. "Blood-hound," I said. Then, and not till then, did he laugh loudly at my joke. Oh, my spirits were wonderful; so much so that I cared not a rap for the nasty remarks of the small dogs—the riff-raff. The bloodhound breed are above noticing petty insults.

On my way home the most pleasing incident of the entire day happened. I was sniffing the heels of a working man as he walked along when suddenly he kicked out and cried to my mistress, "'Ere, miss, call your blood'ound off of me. I don't want to be bit." Now, the lower classes are doggy to a man, and this man knew. Curiously, my mistress, who called me to her, did not seem to realize the significance of the remark; but, as for myself, I was more than delighted. If confirmation were needed here it was!

Indeed, I was so bucked up that I took

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"SURELY YOU NEVER GAVE A BOB FOR THAT LITTLE, TINY STUMP OF A TAIL?"

quite quietly what would have ordinarily thrown me into a paroxysm of rage. In my absence someone had cleaned out my kennel. It was a confounded impertinence. Gone were all my little savings, including several bones of considerable value. This was scarcely the way to encourage thrift, but I said nothing.

Most of the rest of the day I passed in the library opposite the Landseer picture, which I gazed at from time to time. What mean-looking creatures men were compared with him!

Mr. Pretyman noticed the alteration in me. "How that dog's improving," he said. "It must have been the thrashing I gave him yesterday." Blind fool!

FRIDAY.

Black Friday.

All is over. I am undone, and have no wish to live.

It was raining in the morning, and my mistress said, "No walk to-day," and so I was left to my own devices.

There was one room in the house which I had been forbidden to enter. It was my master's dressing-room. Now, no dog can ever settle down and get the restful feeling until he has thoroughly explored his surroundings. The door of the dressing-room was open, and the devil tempted me. I entered.

I am a dog of few and simple tastes. One of them is shoes. Pulling shoes to pieces and eating bits of them is a passion with me. I like them best when there are feet in them, as they squeak then when you bite them. But even when they are empty I love them.

As soon as I was in the room I discovered why it had been forbidden me. It contained my master's larder. On the shelves of a cupboard, which happened to be open, were as many, I should say, as thirty pairs of boots and shoes! I was on them like a hawk.

One pair—brown leather—disagreed with me. My own idea is that they had been poisoned. My master is just the sort of man to wear poisoned shoes. I remember now that there was a peculiar taste about them. Soon after sampling them I was overtaken by agonizing pains in my underneath. I managed to crawl to my kennel, where I was violently sick. But the gripey pains still continued, and my groans soon brought my mistress to see me. With woman's instinct

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she realized at once that I was seriously ill. Indeed, her concern was quite pretty to behold. She consulted her husband and persuaded him to send for the vet. "And we mustn't forget to ask him, when he is here, what sort of dog it is," said my master. "He'll know." Of course he would, for vets. are experts. The thought that my master and mistress would soon know the truth about me had a wonderful effect on me, and I began to feel better at once. I longed to see the effect of the revelation. One result seemed pretty certain to me. I should be transferred to the bassinet, and that rotten baby would be put in my kennel.

It was a long time before the vet. came. Would that he had never come!

They brought him to my kennel. The brute dragged me out with scant ceremony, and held me up by the loose skin at the back of my neck. "Nothing much the matter with him," he said, "except that he's been a bit careless in his diet. All puppies are greedy little devils." Polite, I thought, saying this before me. "I'll send him some physic," he said. "Oh, and doctor," said my mistress, "what sort of dog is he? Will he be a big dog?" Now for the sensational disclosure, I thought, and I wagged my tail violently. The vet. looked at me in his arrogant way. Then he spoke with deliberation. "Well, I daresay he's a very nice little fellow," he said, "and I expect you are fond of him; but he's the most terrible little mongrel there ever was, and he's full size now. His value, I should say, is exactly twopence-halfpenny. Halloa!" he added, a second later. "I've never known a dog to do that before. I believe he has swooned."

They brought me round with some difficulty, and I am beginning to feel better now, but I think I would rather die. For I shall never, never be able to face my friends again. Oh, the difference — the cruel difference—between yesterday and to-day! What does life hold for me now? Nothing—absolutely nothing. I am a dog without a future. Why live? Indeed, a few minutes ago I had made up my mind to starve myself to death, and I would have done so, only I found myself getting so beastly hungry. I must think things out. I wish I could see my mother. Oh, it's a difficult world for little dogs!



"OH, IT'S A DIFFICULT WORLD FOR LITTLE DOGS!"

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Hester Cromartie Rises to the Occasion.

By MARY TENNYSON.

Illustrated by J. Campbell.

THE weather was certainly unmitigatedly wretched—worse than could have been expected in the third week of a hitherto gloriously fine October. Rain fell in torrents, and to make the climatic misery complete, all day a thick, depressing darkness had hung over the western suburbs, which even a very high wind had failed to disperse.

About the worst evening for a social function that could possibly be imagined; and as Hester Cromartie, novelist, wandered from room to room in her well-appointed house at Bedford Park, her charming face was shadowed by an ominous frown.

Two months ago Hester had removed from Kensington to her present far larger quarters, and this was the occasion of her first evening "At Home."

A week previously she had been "At Home" in the afternoon, and had been secretly disappointed at the very scanty number of visitors who had attended her reception, for hitherto she had been a most popular hostess. She was scarcely a brilliant conversationalist, but she had the talent of putting people at ease with each other, and of bringing those together who had interests in common; she was, moreover, very sympathetic, and altogether, as her acquaintances declared, could be relied upon to make things go, and her little rooms at Kensington had been as a rule quite inconveniently crowded when she entertained. Indeed, it was her increasing social success, as much as her literary prosperity, that had induced her to move into the larger house.

But on the Wednesday afternoon scarcely a dozen people had responded to her invitation, and now her anticipations with regard to the evening were of the very gloomiest description.

Though her countenance lacked its usual happy, kindly serenity, Hester Cromartie appeared a very beautiful, distinguished woman as she walked restlessly to and fro. She was exquisitely gowned; indeed, at the back of her mind this very gown weighed rather heavily upon her spirits.

As a rule, she was not extravagant, except possibly with regard to the various charities to which she gave more freely than her circumstances warranted. She was, indeed, eager to assist anyone who enlisted her ready sympathies, and if she had the money in hand took no thought of the future; but she had been tempted in this matter of the gown. She had just received a substantial cheque from the publisher of her last book, and she had desired to look her very best on the occasion of her evening house-warming, for in her new surroundings she felt that she had now an artistic background which would enhance the beauty of any frock.

But that dark and dismal morning she had received the dressmaker's bill, and also the account for the move and the house decorations; and the two sums, added up, made a horrible hole in the publisher's cheque, to say nothing of the engagement of an extra servant, which the larger house made a necessity.

And Hester had struggled vainly with her literary work that day. Suddenly it seemed to her that her new story was utterly poor, and therefore entirely unsaleable; and if she

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didn't sell it—well, she had only a tiny balance at the bank now; she wasn't a quick worker, and she certainly had no fresh subject. Perhaps the move had been a mistake. She was sorry she had left Kensington. But things had seemed to promise so well.



"'WHAT A FOOL I MUST BE TO THINK OF EVERYTHING THAT'S DISAGREEABLE AT SUCH A MOMENT AS THIS!' SHE CRIED, ALOUD."

Impatiently she shook herself, and the electric light twinkled and flashed on the jewelled trimming on her lovely gown.

"What a fool I must be to think of everything that's disagreeable at such a moment as this!" she cried, aloud. "Mercy on me!"—catching sight of herself in a mirror. "I look a very grim sort of person for this diaphanous, fairy-like apparel."

With rather a forced smile she left the drawing-room, and, crossing the cosily-furnished hall, entered the oak-panelled dining-room. The refreshment-table was sumptuously provided and was a delight to the eye, with its display of beautiful old china, and Hester again drew down the corners of her sensitive mouth as she roughly estimated the cost of the pink and yellow roses which decked it and were banked on the mantelpieces of both of the reception-rooms, as well as that of the hall.

Around the table were collected her three maid-servants in the smartest of embroidered aprons and caps, but the faces of all reflected her own uneasiness, and as she glanced silently from one to the other a squall of wind sent the rain in a noisy, disheartening torrent against the windows.

Without a word the lady went back to the drawing-room and resumed her pacing up and

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"'IT'S STILL POURING, MISS,' THE PARLOUR-MAID REMARKED. 'I'VE PUT MY HEAD OUT; IT DON'T LOOK A BIT LIKE LIFTING.'"

down. The invitation had been from eight to eleven-thirty. It was half-past eight now.

"It is a disgusting night," she muttered, "and I don't believe anyone will come. Well, it only shows what personal popularity amounts to, after all. People will crowd your rooms when it gives them no trouble, but move out a couple of miles or so, and they neglect you altogether. It is too humiliating, really! I feel a perfect idiot in this ridiculous get-up."

Again she went into the hall, and encountered the parlour-maid carrying the big plated tea-urn, followed by the housemaid bearing, with a deprecating countenance, the silver tray on which stood the glittering Georgian coffee service. Miss Cromartie had ordered that tea should be ready at eight-fifteen. It was now twenty minutes later than that.

"It's still pouring, miss," the parlour-maid remarked. "I've put my head out; is don't look a bit like lifting—the wind it cutting. They may well call these the

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obnoxious gales. And you can hardly see across the road. I'm beginning to think we sha'n't have no one here to-night. You see, this house is beyond the radius, and——"

"There are such things as taxis, Morton; they take no count of the radius," Hester interposed, irritably. Morton was an old and trusted servant, but Hester resented the sympathy expressed in her most respectable countenance. "Besides, it's only half-past eight, after all."

"It's more than that, miss," Morton persisted, "and it do seem a shame, that it do! Cook wants to know what she's to do about the ices, miss; there's such a lot of 'em. She says the pantry here is none too cool. The kitchen fire seems to warm it up, somehow. I think, so does cook, the pantry is a regular weak spot in this house——"

"Oh, Morton, for pity's sake, don't worry about the pantry now," Hester cried, and Morton responded, hurriedly:—

"No, I won't, miss, and you so bothered with no one coming, and all this expense and trouble."

"Why should you make up your mind no one is coming?" Hester queried, angrily. "You know yourself my evenings have been very popular."

"Oh, yes, in Kensington, miss; that's different. I was always afraid Bedford Park would seem a bit of a come-down. Me and cook thinks it's that. You're just the same, miss; don't you worry about that. But what am I to say about the ices? They are melting quick in the pantry, and yet it seems as cold as Christmas up here, don't it?"

And then Hester began to laugh, not by any means a merry laugh, but she had a quick sense of humour, and she could not help seeing grim fun in her maid's attempt to raise her depressed spirits.

"We'll wait till nine, Morton," she said, "and then you and the other girls go and eat as much slushy ice as you dare. I feel more like hot brandy and water, myself."

"Lor', Miss Hester! and you who can't bear the smell of anything of the sort," the woman exclaimed in dismay; "you've caught cold in that dress, miss, and no wonder; your bare shoulders, such a night as this, give me the shivers."

And at that reassuring remark Hester laughed almost hysterically; she had imagined she looked quite nice, and she was still laughing, much to the discomfort of Morton, who was not in any way deceived by her mistress's mirth, when suddenly there came a knock at the door.

The four women stifled an exclamation, but the housemaid waited until her lady had disappeared quickly into the drawing-room before she opened the door, and let in a blast of wind and rain that almost took away her breath.

Hester Cromartie listened keenly, but though she heard Morton's voice raised in fussy sympathy, she could not identify the subdued tones of the visitor, and it was not until—after some considerable delay—Morton flung open the door and announced "Miss Pearson," that she recognized her guest, and as she did so involuntarily her expressive face fell.

Miss Pearson was the merest acquaintance, and entirely uninteresting in Hester's estimation. She was middle-aged and personally utterly unattractive; her face was plain and haggard, she was almost conspicuously shabby in her attire, and being, moreover, embarrassingly nervous and retiring in manner, as a rule she said the wrong thing.

And her first words on this occasion stirred Hester's smouldering wrath, for it convinced her that, dense and rather stupid as she believed Miss Pearson to be, she had been at least keen enough to realize that her entrance had been a disappointment.

"Oh, you are quite alone," she said, dropping Hester's outstretched hand quickly; "I'm so sorry."

"But why?"

"I have come too early, I mean; I am so sorry."

"Well, but somebody must be the first," Hester said, none too pleasantly; her sensitive nerves were on edge, and she again, as in the case of Morton, chafed under the sympathy for herself expressed in Miss Pearson's faded blue eyes.

"Yes, I know," the visitor responded, nervously, "and I also know I'm—well, I'm afraid I'm not a good beginning."

"Oh, I really can't imagine why you should say that," Hester retorted, irritably. "However, we won't discuss the question. Shall we go and have some tea now, or shall we wait a little while?"

"Oh, let us wait, please," the other cried, with nervous eagerness; "but I am so sorry."

"I am sorry too, since you are," Hester responded, with a forced laugh, struggling with her wrath, "though I'm sure I don't know why."

"Why, all your preparations are so charming, you have taken so much trouble and——"

Miss Pearson's voice faltered and died

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away, and silently inviting her to a comfortable chair, Hester walked to the fire, and occupied herself with an utterly unnecessary rearrangement of the blazing coals, while she strained her ears for the sound of approaching foot teps o: vehicles. If only someone else would come ! She felt in danger of losing her temper with this wearisome woman, and that would be too dreadful.

One visitor, and such a visitor, was far, far worse than none at all. At half-past nine, had she been alone, she could have slipped out of that mockery of a gown, and have settled down comfortably with the new book everyone was talking of. But now she would have to drag through two hours at least with this dull, depressing woman.

What on earth induced her to ask Miss Pearson at all ? she thought, poking viciously at the fire. And then she remembered, and bit her pouting lips. Miss Pearson was a neighbour, and she had been told was an admirer of her stories – that was why she had sent her an invitation. Self-conceit, then, was at the bottom of her hospitality. Well, she was being punished, any way. It really was too horrid for words. However, she couldn't go on poking the fire all night - she wished she could ; it was a sort of relief to bang away at something ; but the fire was already roaring almost dangerously, and the heat was shrivelling the roses on the mantel.

Flinging down the poker, she turned quickly.

"Oh, let us go in to tea," she said. "Why should we wait ? Besides"— with a sudden sense of compunction – "after that terribly cold wind you will be glad of some hot coffee or tea. I ought to have thought of that at once. I'm sorry. Oh, dear," she continued, with a nervous laugh, "you and I are a pair of regular grumblers, aren't we ?"

"I'm stupid, I'm afraid ; I don't understand you," Miss Pearson responded, uneasily.

"Why, we are too sorrowful for words, both of us. Sorry, sorry, sorry, that's all we seem able to say."

"Oh, I'm sor——" and then Miss Pearson flushed crimson.

"There, I told you so," Hester cried, with a laugh ; "we've got into the habit, we actually can't help it."

She crossed to the dining-room, and the elder woman, following, gazed with wistful admiration at the graceful figure in its lovely, glistening gown ; but in the faces of the servants, whom their entrance stirred into activity, she read the same latent dissatisfaction at her presence that she had discerned so plainly in that of her beautiful hostess, and a sudden sense of unfamiliar pity for herself almost overwhelmed her. Why had she come ? It was an unreasonable impulse that had sent her out that night to battle with the storm.

But she had yearned to get away from herself, she had felt she actually must do so. Even to look at the beautiful face that she had never before seen without a sweet, sympathetic expression upon it she knew would help her to bear what had to come ; but now she was in the way, she could not doubt it.

The tears welled up in her colourless eyes and a choking lump rose in her throat. In considerable agitation she pressed her hand to her breast ; her nerves were terribly strained, and there was a horror upon her lest she should break down and make a scene. But at her almost rough touch she winced, and a shuddering, heavy sigh escaped from her pale lips.

And at the piteous sound Hester Cromartie, who, having seated Miss Pearson, had turned to the table to select among the profusion of cakes and delicacies one to offer to her unwelcome guest, experienced a sudden shock, which for the moment caused her a chilling sense of actual dismay, and then sent the blood rushing through her veins in a fiery torrent of bitter, remorseful self-reproach. Oh, how cruelly unjust she was ! How disgracefully she was behaving !

For the moment Hester was utterly crushed by a sense of her own grievous, inexcusable offence against all the laws of hospitality. Here was the one woman who had answered to her call, who had braved wind and weather to do her honour ; and instead of greeting her with outstretched arms, of receiving her with more than usual heartiness, she had let her see that she was unwelcome. Her visitor was evidently suffering, and she herself was responsible for the pain.

For an instant Hester Cromartie stood with bent head, thoroughly ashamed of herself, and then, with an effort, she walked to Miss Pearson's side. She glanced nervously at her, and dropped her eyes quickly ; she had seen the glisten of unshed tears distinctly, and her heart contracted with a fresh pang of compunction, for Miss Pearson's face was very white, and her lips quivered.

Speaking softly and with a slight unsteadiness, Hester said :—

"Miss Pearson, let us make the best of this situation."

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"The best?" Miss Pearson faltered, with her eyes averted.

"Yes, to be sure, the best," the other went on, cheerfully. "See here, this is what I suggest. Let us go back into the drawing-room and have a comfy little table right in front of the fire, and enjoy our tea cosily there."

The wan woman by her side looked up shrinkingly into the smiling, charming face, and again her cheeks were suffused with the painful crimson flush.

"I think I would rather go home," she said, with difficulty; "you would naturally much prefer to be alone, and—and—I'm afraid I'm really not quite well enough to have come out. You will understand," she continued, with some dignity, "I never thought of forcing a *tête-à-tête* upon you, Miss Cromartie. I fancied I should be able to sit in a corner quietly and look on, and that the bright, pretty scene might do me good and be pleasant to remember. But now I will ask you to be so kind as to let me go home."

"Oh, no, no!" Hester cried, greatly stirred. "Please, please stay and keep me company. Oh, don't desert me; if you go you will make me perfectly miserable."

"Is that the truth, Miss Cromartie?"

"Indeed, indeed it is. If you go I shall feel more ashamed than I have ever felt in my life. And I shall have more cause. I couldn't blame you," she continued, with a break in her eager voice; "you would punish me rightly. But do, do stay. Honest Injun, it is the truth. Be magnanimous; come into the drawing-room and let us be a cosy, comfortable couple."

Hester Cromartie was almost startled at the beauty of the smile which suddenly lit up her companion's plain face, rendering it in comparison almost beautiful.

"Why, of course I will come," she responded. "I should like to do so."

And presently, refreshed and strangely comforted—for Hester spared no pains to make tardy amends for what she now considered her most detestable ungraciousness in the reception of her visitor—Anne Pearson gazed round the pretty room and at the charming woman opposite to her with a sigh of pleasure.

"This is better—far better than I expected," she said.

"Better, how?" Hester asked, smiling.

"Why, to have you all to myself, to be sure. But that's horribly selfish, isn't it?"

"I don't know," Hester continued, with a laugh. "It's very complimentary, any way."

"For instance," Miss Pearson went on, "you wouldn't have troubled to decorate your rooms so lavishly if you had only expected me, or to put on that most lovely gown; and yet I am very glad you did."

"If you are glad I am quite repaid," Hester responded, heartily. "I will admit to you, half an hour ago I felt a little like a dressed-up doll. I am glad you admire the frock. I'll confess it's a bit of extravagance on my part."

"It is not so much the frock that I admire, though it's exquisite in its way; it's the fact that it, and the surroundings altogether, emphasize your beauty," the other proceeded, almost in the tone of one who unconsciously gives audible expression to her thoughts. "I have, in common with many other very plain women, an almost exaggerated admiration for personal gifts, and I shall be glad to remember that kindly smiling face and pretty figure, with its bare white arms and neck, in that glittering frock against the background of roses, by and by; I shall try to remember it. I shall even be able to smell the scent of the roses; I am sure I shall."

Greatly interested, Hester Cromartie looked intently at her somewhat inexplicable companion. There was a curious suppressed excitement in Miss Pearson's face. Hester's heart was easily touched, and the wistful gaze of those almost unseeing eyes staring so fixedly into the leaping flames, and the slight quiver in the thin, pale lips, roused in her an almost eager sense of sympathy.

"Tell me," she said, very softly; "tell me, Miss Pearson, what you mean by trying to remember. Are you going away, then?"

She had a singularly sweet voice, and the other woman, lost in her thoughts, again answered almost unconsciously.

"It is always well to have beautiful things to think of in such circumstances as mine," she said, dreamily. "I have heard many women say—poor women, I mean—how they have clung to the remembrance of bright scenes and happy doings, and how it has helped them. And that's why on the eve of my own ordeal I came here to-night."

"What ordeal?" Hester asked, breathlessly.

With a slight start Miss Pearson seemed to rouse herself and looked into her companion's questioning, shrinking eyes.

"What ordeal?" Hester repeated, anxiously.

And then the other smiled again.

"Did I say ordeal?" she responded, softly. "That was scarcely justified; but I have a hard experience before me, and I go away to-morrow."

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"To-morrow!"

"Yes, I start at ten o'clock."

Hester watched her uneasily.

"Is there anything I can do?" she asked, "anything in the world? Oh, I should be so glad if you would let me help."

"No, no, my dear," Miss Pearson answered, quickly, "there is nothing. I never meant to tell you anything of my worries; I answered your question involuntarily. You see, I live alone, and I am not a woman to make friends, and your voice was so sweet; it seemed for once to ease me to speak. Now let us talk of something else."

And then Hester Cromartie rose to the occasion. Crossing to Miss Pearson's side and bending over her, she kissed the faded cheek.

"Talk to me about yourself," she whispered. "I want to know you. I want you to be my friend."

And as the evening passed, Hester wondered that she had hitherto been blind to the curious attraction of the plain woman by her side. It is true on former occasions when they had met they had only exchanged greetings, but how came it that no one had told her of Miss Pearson's conversational abilities? The explanation did not occur to Hester, which was that her companion needed drawing out, and that she herself had a rare talent in this direction.

Miss Pearson's experiences had been varied and exciting, and led on by Hester's eager, skilful questions, the usually reticent, retiring woman spoke with almost thrilling enthusiasm of the scenes through which she had passed in her work among the very poor. She was evidently a heroine in her way, but one who shrank from public notice, and presently, in the middle of an anecdote, she stopped abruptly, and Hester exclaimed:—

"I remember that incident; it was reported in the papers, wasn't it?"

"Why, yes," the other answered, nervously.

"And didn't the brute strike you when you defended the child?"

"Yes, but he was drunk, poor wretch."

"Oh, how awful for you!" Hester cried. "Were you much hurt?"

The other flushed hotly.

"That happened three years ago," she replied, quickly. "You dragged that story out of me. You make one speak against one's will. Now we will talk no more of the world's misery. Tell me about your work. I love your books. They have heartened me so often."

Presently the clock in the hall chimed the hour, and Miss Pearson rose.

"Oh, you are not going yet!" Hester exclaimed: "don't leave me in solitary glory. It's only ten o'clock."

"It's eleven, my dear," Miss Pearson said, with a smile.

"No, surely not!"

"It is, and I must go, for I have some writing to do to-night."

"Some writing? Oh, no, not to-night. You look tired."

"Yes, it must be done to-night."

"But can't you do it here? Can't I help? I'm pretty good at writing, you know."

And again Miss Pearson smiled, as she smoothed the soft cheek gently with her thin hand.

"You certainly could not help me with this," she answered, with a tender inflexion in her voice.

"But you have had nothing to eat since tea," Hester cried, in fresh dismay. "Oh, what must you think of me? As a hostess I am disgraced for ever, but I remembered nothing else while we were talking."

"Nothing could have refreshed me so much as our talk," Miss Pearson responded, gently. "Now good-bye, and God bless you."

"And God bless you," Hester said, with a little tremble in her voice; "surely He will. And when shall we meet again? Oh, don't let it be long. We are going to be friends, aren't we? Not visiting acquaintances merely. Really and truly friends. That is, if you will do me that honour."

The elder woman looked steadfastly at her for a moment, and then she said, quietly:—

"Yes, we will be friends if I come back."

"If you come back?" Hester repeated. "Oh, is there any doubt of that?"

"One never knows, my dear. But if I should want you before that, may I send to you?" She stretched out her hand under the thick cloak which Hester had wrapped round the stooping figure, and Hester clasped it warmly.

"May you send to me? Why, yes," she said, earnestly. "At any time I should consider it a privilege to come to you."

The two kissed; and Hester, with a shawl round her bare shoulders, opened the door for her visitor, who had declined the escort of either of the maids. The cruel wind had died away, the rain had ceased, the fog had disappeared, and the moon shone clearly and brightly in the star-bespangled heavens.

"Oh, beautiful, how beautiful!" Miss

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Pearson cried, lifting her face to the glory. "I shall remember this, too!"

"And you will be sure to send for me?" Hester said, almost wistfully.

"You shall hear from me," the other answered, kissing her once more. "I promise you shall hear from me. Now good-night, and again, God bless you."



"I MUST GO, FOR I HAVE SOME WRITING TO DO TO-NIGHT."

Hester watched until Miss Pearson had turned the corner, and then, with a thoughtful but happy face, she closed the door, and, recrossing the hall, her eye was attracted by a card lying upon one of the Oriental rugs. Picking it up, she looked carelessly at it, and then: he uttered an exclamation of astonishment. It was Miss Pearson's card of invitation, which she had evidently dropped, and on it was the date of the Wednesday in the following week.

At the time these invitations had been sent out Hester had been engrossed in her book, and the matter had been entrusted to a young girl clerk who had been suddenly thrown out of work, and who had applied to the novelist for assistance.

"My word!" Morton cried. "The wrong date! What a cruel shame! This explains everything, then."

"Not everything," Hester replied. "How was it Miss Pearson came?"

"Oh, she knew it was this Wednesday. Her housemaid and I often has a chat; we deal at all the same shops. I don't suppose she ever looked at the date on the card. She's rather

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a stupid sort of body, they say. Well, miss, it *has* been a downright failure, that it has!"

"It has been the biggest success I've ever known!" Hester cried, with sparkling eyes. "I feel more happy than I can say, to-night. I have made a friend, a real friend, one whom I can love and honour, too, and there are not too many of such in the world, Morton. Come, cheer up," she continued, laughing at the maid's astonished face. "We shall have to repeat this festive scene next Wednesday. Not the roses, though; I can't rise to such heights as that two weeks following."

"And all them lovely flowers has been wasted on Miss Pearson!" Morton exclaimed, dolefully.

And then Hester's smile grew very sweet. "Wasted?" she repeated, softly. "Scarcely wasted, Morton."

And at eight o'clock the next Wednesday Hester, gowned as before, was seated in the drawing-room when a telegram was brought to her.

"Come to me at once," it ran. "Don't delay—Anne Pearson," and the address was that of a nursing home in Devonshire Street.

Her face suddenly paling, Hester Cromartie rose hurriedly.

"Get me a taxi at once; there are plenty at the station," she said. "And tell Emma to bring me my fur cloak."

Morton stared open-mouthed at her mistress.

"A taxi now, miss?" she cried. "Why, it's eight o'clock!"

"What does that matter?" Hester demanded, impatiently. "I must go now at once. Hurry, hurry, Morton!"

"Oh, my word, miss, what's come to you? Go where?"

"To Miss Pearson. Morton, she must be ill. She has sent for me."

"Well, but, miss," Morton continued, deprecatingly, "people will be here in a minute or two. Besides, you can't go off dressed like that."

"The gown will not show under the cloak. Hurry, Morton! I said I would come at once at any time."

"But the visitors, miss?"

"Oh, say what you like to them; send them away; do anything," Hester replied, distractedly. "Oh, Morton, dear woman, hurry!"

And when Hester entered the sick-room, and with a stifled cry fell on her knees by the side of the bed, Anne Pearson's pallid, worn face was suddenly illumined by her rare smile.

Two hours later Hester went out from the room with the tears coursing quickly down her cheeks. Anne Pearson had sent for her to bid her good-bye, and to tell her that she had bequeathed to her every farthing of her rather considerable fortune. No one had a claim upon her, and she had made her will on leaving Hester the previous Wednesday night.

"And there is no hope that she may recover?" Hester said, with a sob, to the matron of the house.

"I am afraid not," she answered, gravely, "though the operation was a success, and it was found that the disease was not nearly so serious as we had feared; in fact, that it was in no way malignant."

"Then why—why should she not get well?" Hester demanded. "She is not old, is she?"

"She is forty-one."

"Forty-one only?"

"Yes; she looks nearer sixty, doesn't she? But she has lived a life of entire self-sacrifice, and now she is making no effort; for three years, you see, she has been existing with this dread upon her. Her nerve is shattered. Now she seems content to fade out of life painlessly."

Without a word Hester Cromartie turned and re-entered the room. Miss Pearson's eyes were closed, but she opened them when she felt Hester's warm touch upon the hands which were folded quietly on her breast.

"Dear!" Hester whispered, tenderly. "Oh, my dear, don't leave me. Live for me. I, too am lonely. Don't rob me of my friend."

A month later they journeyed together to the South of France, and after a delightful three months of basking in the sun and congenial companionship, turned their faces homewards.

But Hester was strangely silent during the journey, and when they were alone in the railway-carriage at last, Anne Pearson, well-dressed, healthy, and cheerful, twenty years younger in aspect, scarcely recognizable as the nervous, forlorn woman of six months ago, interrupted her grave reflections.

"What's the matter?" she asked, softly.

Hester looked up, and there were tears in her eyes.

"It is all over, the lovely time," she said, "and I shall miss you—oh, how I shall miss you, Anne."

"But we shall see each other often, Hester."

"Yes; but we shall not be together. You won't be there always when I want you. I have my work, but I'm often lonely."

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Anne Pearson did not reply in words, but she put her arm tenderly round Hester's slender figure, and the other, looking into her face, suddenly cried out:—

"Shall we live together? Is that what you mean? Oh, say that's what you mean—do—do say it!"

And on the anniversary of that stormy October night, for the last time Hester wore the glittering robe, and the mantel in the drawing-room was banked with sweet-scented roses. But the friends were quite alone.

"You silly woman," Anne Pearson said, lovingly, "to have wasted your money on those roses."



"'DEAR!' HESTER WHISPERED, TENDERLY. 'OH, MY DEAR, DON'T LEAVE ME. LIVE FOR ME.'"

"Every year on this day I will waste my money in the same way," Hester cried, with glistening eyes. "It is a festival, Anne, a festival that I will never neglect. It is to do honour to the day I found my friend!"

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THE SORT OF WOMAN A MAN LIKES

A Symposium of the Opinions of Well-known Novelists.

Illustrated by Alfred Leete.

IN a recent number of THE STRAND MAGAZINE we published a collection of the opinions of lady novelists on "The Sort of Man a Woman Likes." The symposium created such widespread interest among members of both sexes that we now give the opinions of many of our leading novelists on "The Sort of Woman a Man Likes."

ROBERT HICHENS.

Men like all kinds of women. There are ugly men who adore beautiful women, but there are also handsome men who worship at the shrines of women who are quite unlike Helen of Troy. Many good men have loved, and will love, bad women. Who has not seen bad men devoted to saintly women? On the other hand, the dwarf is often captivated by the large-framed woman whose head approaches the ceiling. I have known deaf women beloved by talkative men; lame women cherished by men who were agile; stupid women thought sensible, or even clever, by men who were brilliant; affected women solemnly admired by the most natural of men; girls who turned the heads of grandfathers, and old women who lured mere boys to their feet.

Effeminate men often seek "manny" women, while the delicate woman who never leaves the sofa attracts the Nimrod

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and the hunter of big game. The man who does not know "God Save the King" when he hears it as often as not marries the woman who is "mad about Wagner," and the man who never goes to church chooses as his helpmate the devout woman who visits a "district" and teaches in Sunday-school. All kinds of women are liked —nay, more, are loved by men. Why not? For where is the man who cannot find one woman—if not two—to think him what he probably thinks himself, the most perfect man in the world—until the honeymoon is waning?

W. B. MAXWELL.

The woman an ordinary man likes best is the one he wants in his dreams—the ineffably sweet shadow who takes colour, substance, life, while the uncontrolled circuits of his brain flash their memories, hopes, and imaginations; who smiles and comes nearer and nearer as he beckons and longs; who enters the haven of his arms with a sigh of rapture, and who at the same supreme moment fades or flames into nothingness because a servant is knocking at a bedroom-door and saying that the dull, every-day round has begun again.

Outside of dreams we ordinary men want a woman who is so pretty that we are always proud, and so good that we are never uneasy; a woman who wears well and looks her best in two-year-old gowns; who considers the entrance-fees of men's clubs reasonable and the price of ostrich feathers iniquitous; who employs the adjective "important" in relation to our work, our food, and our desire for unfettered holidays; who laughs at our small jokes and preserves a marble face when we are scored off by others; with whom we have the massively comforting sensation that she will never now recognize the plain, staring fact that we are not brave, not wise, not kind, not clever; who goes on loving us grandly, without thought of the ugly past and without fear of the empty future, just as little girls love their broken dolls, as mothers love their disgraced children, as angels love the wingless worms that they see far down below when they look out of God's great window—and the astounding, incredible thing is that, wanting all that, we sometimes get it.



"THE DWARF IS OFTEN CAPTIVATED BY THE LARGE-FRAMED WOMAN WHOSE HEAD APPROACHES THE CEILING."

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JOSEPH HOCKING.

In answering your question as to the kind of woman a man likes, I am thinking not of the kind of creature who, by a pretty face and smart talk, may have a passing attraction, but of those more enduring qualities which he desires in the woman with whom he has to spend his life; and I can perhaps best deal with that by first mentioning the kind of woman which, according to my experience, a man does not like. He doesn't like a political woman, and on the whole has very little sympathy with the suffragette order, who is willing to sacrifice woman's superiority to man in order to become his equal. He doesn't like women who would seek to avoid the duties and joys of motherhood, or who regard domestic duties as something to be shunned. He doesn't like a woman who has little or no love for home, and who, as a consequence, would be anything but a helpmate to him in the stress and storm of life.



"HE DOESN'T LIKE A POLITICAL WOMAN."

Man's ideal of womanhood, as far as I know men, is suggested by the old-fashioned word "womanliness." She is a sympathetic companion, one who desires to share in the joys and sorrows of her husband. She is a lover of home and children, and finds her greatest joys by her own fireside. She is far removed from the creature whose main thought is her own pleasure. Whether she is intellectual or not I do not think of great importance, but she must be pure in heart and life, and, like Dickens's Agnes, hers must be "the hand that ever points upward."

COULSON KERNAHAN.

To describe, in a few lines, the kind of woman a man likes might well give pause to a Shakespeare, or, in our own century, to a Meredith; for no one man can speak for all men. All he can essay is to describe the woman who most appeals to *him*, in which case, fortunately—for there would be unpleasantness were we all to fall in love with the same woman—the diversity of opinion will be as "infinite" as Cleopatra's "variety."

Were I asked to indicate the woman a man is likely to marry, I should have to admit that, in many cases, propinquity—the girl next-door, one's sister's best friend, in brief, the most attractive maiden in whose company an impressionable youth is most frequently thrown—plays no small part in match-making. As G. H. Lorimer says in his shrewd and slangy Americaneese: "Marriages may be made in heaven, but most

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"A LOVER OF HOME AND CHILDREN."

engagements are made in the back parlour, with the gas so low that a fellow doesn't really get a square look at what he's taking."

But in the matter of falling in love I agree with my friend, Mr. Max Pemberton. The woman that the majority of men like may be dark or fair, tall or short, plump or slim, so long as she is, before all things, womanly. She need not be clever, provided that she is clever enough to understand, to sympathize



"THERE WOULD BE UNPLEASANTNESS WERE WE ALL TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE SAME WOMAN."

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"ONE'S SISTER'S BEST FRIEND."

with, and to idealize the man of her choice; and in some inexplicable way as magnetically to be "thrown" to him as he is magnetically drawn to her. There must be between the two that subtle and mysterious attraction—an attraction alike of the senses and of the spirit—which we call love, but which, after æons of love-making and marrying, we do not to this day apprehend.

MAX PEMBERTON.

Chiefly a womanly woman. She must be the only woman in all the world for him, and he must be conscious of the fact. It is quite impossible for one man to convince another that any particular type of beauty is an element in the mystery of love. The appeal is from the soul of the woman to the soul of the man. Nevertheless, it is the quality of womanhood, of gentleness, and patience, and capacity to love that is the supreme thing.

CLAUDE ASKEW.

This is a question upon which it is very hard to generalize. A man may like a woman as a friend who is utterly different in type from the woman he chooses for his wife. Physical attraction may draw him one way, mental attraction another. I should say, then, that the kind of woman a man must like best—if he is lucky enough to find her—is she who appeals to him physically and mentally, and who is clever enough to keep her grip in both directions. She may not necessarily have the same attraction for others, but she is the right woman for that man.

More broadly speaking, I should say there is no quality that endears a woman so much to a man as that of real and spontaneous sympathy.

E. TEMPLE THURSTON.

The kind of woman a man likes is the woman who can minister to his selfishness without obliterating herself, who can listen to his egotism without making him feel he is monopolizing the conversation, who

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can clothe his thousand faults with the desire to win to his few virtues; she who can be mother and child, mistress and wife, friend and counsellor to his countless inconsistencies.

F. FRANKFORT MOORE.

I fancy that the kind of woman a man likes is the kindest of womankind. There is scarcely an animal in the brute creation that cannot be subdued by kindness, and man is the head of the brute creation, and one of the most easily subdued by the woman who is invariably kind, even when she is married—as every woman is—to the wrong man.

My experience has long ago led me to believe that a man is rarely influenced in his liking for a woman by her possession of any other quality. Though she speak with the tongues of angels and have not kindness, she is to him but as a tinkling symbol of loquacity, instead of being the realization. The fewer the tongues that she speaks with the more he likes her. She should confine herself to the language of the angels if she wishes to be liked by men. The women who are liked least by men are those who try to speak with the tongues of men, and the greater the success of their efforts in this direction the less they are liked by men. I plump for the woman who is kind. Men do not want a polyglot; they want one who will put the kettle on.



"THE WOMAN WHO IS INVARIABLY KIND."

TOM GALLON.

This is so intimate a question that it can only be answered in a strictly personal sense. I can only tell you the sort of woman that I, as a busy and somewhat irritable writer, would like.

She must be prepared to take the whole burden of every household and outside trouble upon her shoulders; I should never have time nor the ability to share them with her. She must be prepared to keep a smiling face and a cheerful demeanour in all circumstances, whether with the knowledge that she is almost a millionaire, or is on the verge of bankruptcy, and she must be a first-rate critic of anything and everything I care to write, such criticism being strictly limited to unstinted praise only. On the other hand, she must cheerfully and meekly receive on her devoted head all expressions

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"CRITICISM STRICTLY LIMITED TO UNSTINTED PRAISE."

of opinion concerning the characters and bodies and souls of all such outside critics as dare to differ from me or express disapproval of my work.

In a word, she should be prepared to find herself in double harness with a wayward, whimsical creature of uncertain temper, for ever kicking over the traces.

Perhaps the above explains the fact that I am a bachelor.

W. W. JACOBS.

When I have had more experience I may be able to give a comprehensive description of the kind of woman a man likes. At present I like so many kinds that it is impossible.

Joseph Hocking, Photo. by J. Weston & Son; Frankfort Moore, Photo. by J. Russell & Sons; Max Pemberton, Photo. by Bassano; Claude Askew, Robert Hichens, and Tom Gallon, Photos. by Elliott & Fry; Coulson Kernahan, Photo. by Kent & Lacey; Temple Thurston, Photo. by Florence Vandamm; W. B. Maxwell, Photo. by C. Vandyk.

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POPULAR PICTURES OF THE YEAR



BARBARA, DAUGHTER OF F. M. FRY, Esq.
By F. Cadogan Cowper, A.R.A.
Exhibited at the Royal Academy.

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"HER FIRST LETTER." By G. A. STORRY, A.R.A.

Exhibited at the Royal Academy.

WHEN deciding as to what type of painting one may justly apply the term "one of the popular pictures of the year" one must naturally be guided by certain well-defined pictorial qualities. Technique is, of course, the first consideration in the eyes of an artist, though from a popular point of view there must be the power of arresting instant attention, not by Futurist or Cubist methods, but by the ability to depict on canvas a scene that not only makes a direct appeal to the artistic sense, but is capable of taking a strong hold on the imagination. A good "subject" picture, in fact, one which tells a story or else proclaims that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Into the latter category falls the painting, by Mr. F. Cadogan Cowper, A.R.A., of Barbara, daughter of F. M. Fry, Esq., in this year's Academy. This is a finely-painted picture of purely domestic interest, just a baby staring in wonder at a beautiful big cat. Who is there who could resist the winsome charm of Mr. Cowper's extremely youthful "sitter"? Mr. G. A. Storey, who has long been a favourite with the general picture-loving public, has also at Burlington House a painting dealing with a familiar, homely subject. The title, "Her First Letter," explains itself.

Mr. J. Lomax has painted many a stirring picture, but it is seldom that he has exceeded in dramatic interest the gambling scene we next reproduce. "The Last Deal" is the title, and realism the predominant note. The whole story impresses itself vividly on the imagination at once—there has been high play with the cards, hot words, a bitter quarrel, and a tragic ending.

Another subject, "Rose Mary and the Berylstone," by Mr. A. C. Cooke, lacks nothing in dramatic intensity. The theme is from Rossetti's poem, "Rose Mary," and depicts the doomed girl before the altar and the berylstone, the magic crystal which showed her a false picture of her lover's fate.

By reason of a succession of what have been termed "problem pictures," the Hon. John Collier has won for himself a very wide popularity, and it is safe to say that his work is as eagerly looked for at the Academy as that

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"THE LAST DEAL." By J. A. Lomax.

By permission of the Berlin Photographic Co., 149, New Bond Street, W.

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"ROSE MARY AND THE BERYLSTONE."
By A. C. Cooke.
Exhibited at the Royal Academy.

of any artist. In 1905 the most-discussed picture of the year was his "The Cheat," and since then there have been "Mariage de Convenance" and "The Sentence of Death." This year we have "A Fallen Idol," next reproduced. At first glance our readers will probably sum this up as depicting an erring wife kneeling at the side of her husband in all the agony of a pitiful confession. And in the look of hopeless sorrow on the young husband's face they will doubtless detect the shattering of a man's happiness and his faith in all he held most dear. A second glance, and a very different solution may present itself. Maybe the man is the wrongdoer and the young wife, bowed down with grief—her idol fallen—kneels at his side, ready, perhaps, to forgive.

Another picture that is bound to attract attention is "St. Christopher," by Miss E. F. Brickdale, A.R.W.S. Handled in a strong, masterly style, Miss Brickdale's picture deals with the legend of St. Christopher's journey across the water carrying the child Christ on his back.

Mr. James Clark, R.I., has an altogether delightful picture at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours this year. He calls it "The Incoming Tide," a tide that has brought with it a crowd of jolly-looking water-babies, painted in the artist's happiest vein.

At the same galleries Mr. W. Rainey, R.I., exhibits his cleverly executed water-colour, "Sanctuary," a picture that tells its own story in the attitudes and intense expressions on the faces of the refugees, and also in the figure of the monk, cross in hand, keeping their pursuers at bay.

Miss I. L. Gloag, R.O.I., has won fame in the Art world by reason of her strong technique and fine colour effects, and she is worthily represented in this year's Academy by her picture "The Choice." The *motif* lies in the choice to be made between the beautiful embroidered shawl with which the standing figure is draped and the several others shown. A looking-glass on the wall shows an old lady as an interested spectator.

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"A FALLEN IDOL." By The Hon. John Collier.

Exhibited at the Royal Academy.

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"ST. CHRISTOPHER." By Miss E. F. Brickdale, A.R.W.S.

Exhibited at the Royal Academy.

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"THE INCOMING TIDE." By JAMES CLARK, R.I.

Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours.



"THE CHOICE." By MISS I. L. GLOAG, R.O.I.

Exhibited at the Royal Academy.

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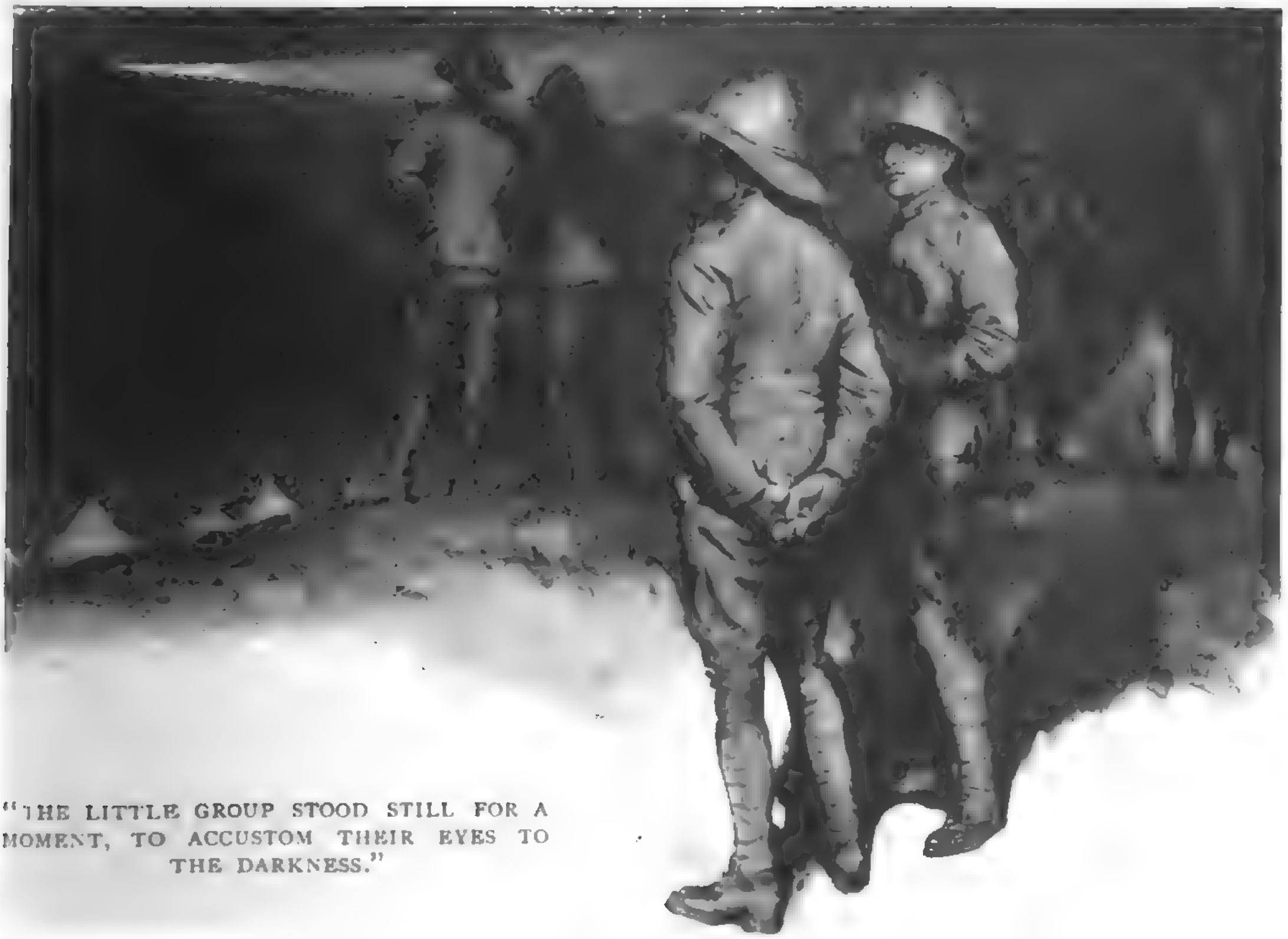
"SANCTUARY."

By William Rainey, R.I.

Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours.

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"THE LITTLE GROUP STOOD STILL FOR A MOMENT, TO ACCUSTOM THEIR EYES TO THE DARKNESS."

THE DIVIDING LINE.

By FRANK E. VERNEY.

Illustrated by Christopher Clarke, R.I.

"THE dividing line between sheer funk and reckless pluck," asserted the little captain of Sappers, "is very thin."

"On the contrary," retorted Major Belton, of the "Fifth," almost angrily, "it couldn't be wider. A man is either a coward, or he isn't. And there's an end of it."

There was a murmur of agreement from the brown-faced, khaki-clad listeners, and one man, tall, straight, and young, with the two stars of a senior subaltern on his shoulder and the Egyptian ribbon on his breast, rose from his seat and began buckling on his belt and sword.

"There's as much difference," concluded the major, "between the two as there is—between Tracey here and—a farmyard chicken."

There was a general laugh, and Tracey's ears flushed as he tightened up his belt.

"Do you think," he asked the Sapper, "we are any nearer a scrap up here?"

Everyone eagerly awaited the answer, for the little man had only come up from the main line an hour before.

"Not much; though there were signs of Dutchmen down at Wetersdorp."

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"Bad luck!" commented Tracey, briefly, picking up his waterproof.

"You're bloodthirsty beggars," growled the weary Sapper. "You don't know when you're well off. You've got the best camp on the whole line; you've bagged this yeomanry kit to keep you comfortable"—he pointed to the dripping canvas of the large mess-tent, illumined by sputtering oil lamps that swung from the ridge-pole—"the whole battalion is bedded down like a summer camp at home—and yet you're grousing!"

The major smiled, and there was pride in his face as he said:—

"The 'Fifth' are not out exactly for their health, are they, boys?"

But the officers of the "Fifth" had become dubious on the point. It did not appear that either the G.O.C. in C. or the Boers believed they were there for the detriment of anyone else's health. For several months the commandeered canvas of the "Fifth's" lines had reverberated to forceful observations regarding Line of Communication work and an enemy who did not come near, and "scrapping," which every corps got but the "Fifth." And not the least emphatic and earnest of these "grousings" were "Dreadnought" Tracey's, as they called him in B Company.

Tracey lifted the dripping flap of the tent and stepped out into the black darkness, followed by several of the others. Baadjste Valley sloped gently away from them along five miles of rocky river in a great, kopje-guarded basin, to the rolling veldt, along which had been laid, by tireless men in khaki, the double line of rails that fed the Western Advance. Sheltered on either side by a bulwark of hills lay the comfortable lines of the "Fifth" and the Sappers' temporary depôt, the whole forming an outlying picket, as it were, to guard the western loop of the Line of Communication, and to hold the western flank against a possible visit from De Wet's flying five thousand.

The little group stood still for a minute, to accustom their eyes to the darkness. Just below them, half a stone's throw, lay the men's lines, luxurious in complete camp equipment and comparative leisure. In most of the tents could be seen the glimmer of lights, silhouetting the occupants on the wet canvas. From one tent, which appeared to contain twice the regulation number of tenants, came the strains of "Home, Sweet Home," rendered on a mouth-organ.

"Fine targets for snipers," remarked a young subaltern.

"A rabbit couldn't pass our pickets on the hills," answered Tracey, "and we're absolutely 'doggo' in this basin."

"There's not a Dutchman within two days' march," contributed another.

"They're awake up at the signalling post all right," observed the adjutant, who had come out with the others.

"How many of you fellows can read the message?" he inquired.

Six pairs of eyes stared away through the damp darkness to the tall, conical hill at the western end of the valley, whence, at disciplined intervals, winked a small bright light in a series of long and short exposures.

"E-N-E," spelled out three voices.

"Dashed blurred with this mist!"

"They're repeating."

"E-N-E-M-Y. Enemy!" all exclaimed at once.

The adjutant turned suddenly and dived back to the mess-tent. "Orton!" he called. "Orton!"

The signalling officer emerged hurriedly in response.

"Number One Post on the hill there," said the adjutant, briefly. "See what the message is."

Orton's specialist eye took up the message at once. "They've just got the Base," he announced. "McBain's there—Advancing—on—west—front—large—numbers."

The light flickered and danced before strained eyes in an eager silence, as Orton read in the whole message. In a minute or so he turned to the adjutant.

"The complete message," he announced, "is: 'Mounted enemy with guns advancing on west front; large numbers; distant seven miles rear of Tree Belt. Visiting Patrol Number Three Picket, Number One Post.'"

"Hooray! At last!" said Tracey, quietly, but the ejaculations of the others were less suppressed.

"Steady a minute," requested the adjutant. "Tracey! Number One Post's yours. You might get ready, in case the C.O. wants you to ride off and verify. Someone else will do orderly officer for you."

He turned to the others. "Gentlemen, please tell everybody to wait in the mess-tent until the C.O. comes."

The telephone bell in the "orderly-room" shrilled out with the signalling base call as the group excitedly dispersed.

Tracey turned, and strode quickly to his own tent. Inside, he lit a candle and stuck it on the packing-case that did duty for dressing-table and washstand. And then he took a flat package out of one of his breast-

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pockets and opened it, disclosing a bundle of letters and a photograph. He looked hard at the photograph for half a minute, and then he stood it on the packing-case near the light, in a slit that had evidently been made for the purpose. And while he got together his compass, revolver, haversack, water-bottle, etc., his eyes were constantly turned to the photograph.

It was the portrait of a girl, young, slim, and beautiful, whose lovely, appealing face looked out of the photograph as though alive.

When Tracey had completed his preparations he took up the photograph and stood staring at it



"HIS EYES WERE CONSTANTLY TURNED TO THE PHOTOGRAPH."

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again. Slowly he turned it over. On the back, in a large, girlish handwriting, was written: "Come safe back to me, my beloved. I shall not know peace again until your face bends over me and I look into your dear, brave eyes. For the love of Heaven, come back to me!"

The words "come back to me" were large and dominant. It was a girl's heart speaking.

Tracey swallowed something, and then, almost fiercely, he put the photograph back in its oilskin wrapper and replaced it in his pocket. But he carefully buttoned the flap, and there was an unfathomable look in the steel-blue of his eyes, and his clear-cut face was rigid as he blew out the candle.

When Tracey re-entered the mess-tent a few minutes later the colonel was seated at a trestle table, with Major Belton on his right, and all the officers who were not out with the pickets stood around. He gave a friendly smile to Tracey as the latter entered.

"Gentlemen," said the colonel, shortly, "you've all heard that at last we are going to get something that we have all been waiting for. The enemy are executing a movement which the G.O.C. in C. anticipated months ago when he sent us here. As you know, we are guarding an important and vulnerable strategic point of the Line of Communication, and our latest instructions are to hold it at any cost. I doubt if the G.O.C. realized the possibility of an attack on such a large scale, but that makes no difference, and will make no difference, to us. It's our business to keep the enemy out of this valley, and," he added, with pride, "I think the 'Famous Fifth,' as they call us, will do it, or—cease to be. The issue is grave, but it is our chance. Mr. Tracey, B Company will be in the centre of the vulnerable point"—all crowded round to the large map on the table, where the colonel's finger was pointing—"that is, where Number One Post is."

When the colonel had finished his instructions he turned again to Tracey. "Tracey," he commanded, "you will please repeat my orders to Captain Maude."

Tracey closed his notebook.

"And," added the old colonel, with his friendly smile, "it is needless for me to say that I believe the honour of the regiment could not be in safer keeping than 'Dreadnought' Tracey's, as B Company call you."

Later, when Tracey stood in front of a line of men on the sodden space in front of the orderly tent, superintending the bestowal of many squat boxes of ammunition, amidst the murmur of half-repressed excitement and the clatter of rifle-bolts, and cartridges tumbling into many leather pouches, the colonel's words still rang in his ears, and he would have gone to death itself, as the men would have followed him, for the sake of the "Fifth" and its loved chief.

At four next morning the sun peeped over the ridges into the zigzag trenches and began to instil warmth into the cold, damp forms of the cramped occupants; and the veldt, that stretched away to the trees which masked the line of advance, began to glow with the beautiful tints of an African sunrise. To the right flank, near the rushing stream, it shone on a double line of steel rails—marks of War's grip on peaceful Nature.

Tracey lay in the second tier of trenches, nearest the low hill summit. All had been done that could be done, except the waiting. Would they come on, or would they turn back? he speculated, as everyone else was speculating. Of course, there was no question about it. At any moment now might begin the vital struggle that was to end in one of those glorious moments for which he had always longed since he first walked across a parade ground with the badge of his famous regiment on his collar. Egypt had but whetted his appetite. What he wanted was to see himself helping largely to add still another honour to the colours he had so often carried. Then his life's desire would be satisfied.

Suddenly he took the oilskin packet from his pocket, and from another pocket, ostentatiously, he took a map. Unfolding the packet, he took out the photograph and laid it on the map, and the men near saw their officer intently studying the map. Tracey could see nothing, feel nothing, hear nothing. He was conscious only of the beautiful young face that was gazing up at him appealingly. He turned the picture over. "Come back to me!" "Come back to me!" blazed the words.

With a quick movement he gathered up map and photo together, and thrust them into his pocket. Softly he cursed the vigorous imagination that Providence had bestowed upon him. A soldier should have his thoughts, like his men, under control, properly in hand. But his thoughts ran on, unchecked and analytic, as is not unusual to men lying waiting on the field of battle. But still he did not feel or think as he was now feeling and thinking when he was on his previous campaign, before he had met Elaine.

Bang! A whining shriek. Bang! and a series of whistling noises and vicious phuts

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that flung up earth and chips of rock. Shrapnel! The curtain was up.

Tracey was on his feet, with his glasses levelled over the breastworks.

"Four thousand yards, and the range to a tick," he said to the sergeant on his left. "Keep well under, the front men," he commanded, quietly. "No moving about, and, above all, no smoking. We don't want to give away more than we can help." The words were repeated down the lines by the N.C.O.'s with various additions.

"That's a smeller-out, sir," said the sergeant. "They're watching with their glasses, and if they see as much as a cap button, we shall have it like fury."

There was no lethargy in the position now. "I's awaiting, waiting, waiting for you, Josey, in the old place," hummed a Tommy near Tracey. A light-hearted laugh travelled along the company. Through Tracey surged a feeling of fine pride.

Another whining shriek, and a report, and a second shrapnel tore up the earth on the top of the hill well behind the breastworks. Then came half-a-dozen shells together, and the air wailed and whistled. An ear-splitting bang, and the four guns of the defence sped an answer from their hidden position on the valley side of the hill to the wooded cover that sheltered the enemy. The range had been taken to a yard months before; lateral adjustment guided by the smoke-cloud of the enemy's battery gave the exact spot.

The commander of Tracey's company, Captain Maude, joined his senior subaltern in the trench.

"We'll see the beggars soon, I reckon," he said. "They know pretty well where the weak spot is, and they know we are not far away."

Tracey nodded quietly.

"The sooner the better," he said. "The guns can't do much damage."

"They'll be useful to keep our heads down, anyhow, when the attack develops. How goes it?"

Tracey's eyes glittered.

"It's better than most things," he answered. "I hope they'll be up here soon."

"You'll get a bellyful before you've done, old son," said the captain, who had a whole row of ribbons on his khaki jacket. "It'll be touch and go to save this old depôt, and," he added, quietly, "it's up to B Company chiefly, and an enfilade with those," and he nodded to the left, where the trench swerved sharply and opened up two vicious, dull brass muzzles that stared across the face of the masked trenches, and swept the flats at the valley entrance.

For answer Tracey lifted his glasses and began looking over the boulders of the trench mask towards the line of advance.

"You, or whichever of us can," continued Maude, "will handle one gun himself with the gun section, for the position will be hot. We've put as much cover as possible, but that isn't a lot, because we daren't risk impeding the line of fire."

Tracey nodded.

"It will be a lovely scrap. I hope they won't change their minds before they get up to the turnstile," he concluded, grimly.

"There's not much likelihood," was the answer. "They've made up their minds to get in—and there's plenty of 'em," and he sidled away carefully down the trench.

Presently the guns of the defence were barking more rapidly, as a long line of smudges began emerging from the timber, and Tracey, with his eyes glued to his glasses, stood watching, quite regardless of the shrapnel hail.

It was nearly an hour later when Tracey turned and passed the command along his trench:—

"At nine hundred yards, independent firing."

Tracey was as cool as if on field-firing exercises. As the sergeant on the left began adjusting the sights of his rifle another shell burst, and a large splinter struck him and tore his arm away, and he fell, bleeding, against his officer.

Tracey swore softly, and picked up the fallen rifle. He bent over the unconscious N.C.O. and took some clips of cartridges from the open pipeclayed pouch. His feeling was one of acute anger. Violently he jerked back the bolt, opened the "cut-off," and rammed a clip into the magazine with his thumb. He peered over the breastwork to observe the effect of the fire that was rattling out deliberately to right and left of him.

"Seven hundred and fifty yards," he called.

And soon the steel barrel of the N.C.O.'s rifle grew hot with the passage of nickel-sheathed lead, and empty cartridge cases studded the earth.

A quarter of an hour or so later Tracey stood at the rear of the excavations, his head carelessly exposed above the banked shelter, making his calm calculations.

"Three hundred yards rapid!" was the command that penetrated the continuous

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"TRACEY STOOD LIKE A MAN OF MARBLE. 'COME BACK TO ME!

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COME BACK TO ME!' THE WORDS WERE SEARING HIS VERY SOUL."

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clamour of exploding cartridges and the whistling ping-ping of hostile bullets.

Now the wide extended firing-line of the enemy had reached the rock-strewn base ground of the low hillside, and was advancing rapidly in true Boer fashion by odd units, from rock to rock, from cover to cover, taking advantage of every boulder, each man firing carefully with vital effect from shelter, and then dashing ahead for fifteen yards, dropping down behind anything, and then firing again. And two hundred yards or less in the rear steadily followed up the enemy's supports, and in rear of them their reserves. The veldt and the rough ground were alive with the Dutchmen, and the shriek and moan of raining shrapnel conspired with the whistling zip of Mauser bullets to demoralize the British position.

Tracey, cool and collected as on parade, had thrown down his rifle, and was calmly standing up directing the fire.

"Steady, boys. Let every cartridge tell, and pump it into 'em." The light of battle and the lust of blood gleamed in his eyes.

The forward works had suffered badly from the overwhelming fire, and many of his own men were down to rise no more.

"We shall know what's what pretty soon," announced an unsteady voice, and Major Belton sat down near Tracey, with blood spurting from the place where his left ear had been. "It's nothing, my boy," he growled. "Give me your handkerchief."

Tracey snatched his handkerchief out of his pocket, and with it came the map and the photograph. The photograph dropped face downwards on a mound of blood-stained earth. Tracey, suddenly mesmerized, stared at it.

There was a scuffle farther along the trench, and the captain joined them. He clutched Tracey by the arm. With his other hand he pointed to a stripped stake that stuck up, white and grim, to their immediate right front.

"If they reach that," he said, "it's up to us, old man, and Heaven help all sinners."

As he spoke the last word he staggered suddenly and choked, and slipped down at his subaltern's feet. And his life's blood gushed from the hole in his throat where a Mauser bullet had penetrated. Some of the blood spattered on to the photograph. Swiftly Tracey bent down and picked up the picture. "Come back to me! Come back to me!" burned the words on the back.

At that moment another shell—one of the last—exploded quite close, and half a-dozen men cursed horribly and dropped. Tracey stood like a man of marble. "Come back to me! Come back to me!" The words were searing his very soul.

Mechanically he turned the photograph over. Two agonized eyes looked up at him out of a young, tender face that seemed to quiver with bitter anguish. A spot of blood dropped on to the girl's slim neck. Tracey reeled—but not from his slight wound. Merciful Father! Her tortures would be of the accursed. He could never go back alive.

His sight swerved suddenly back to the scene. Three parts of the whole defence were down. Six times the number of the survivors were almost up to the first works, and behind them in swarms almost followed overwhelming supports.

The leaden hail was increasing. Shouts and curses filled the air. Here and there in the defence was a tiny oasis of silence. They were nearly up to the stake, that infernal crowd of Boers! Nothing could stay them; nothing could stop them taking the position! But it was a soldier's death, anyway!

The photograph burned his hand, and the anguished cry: "Come back to me! Come back to me!" stabbed his ears.

Across his eddying brain flashed the picture of her, slender and beautiful and happy, as he had known her, and he saw her again with large eyes that could not weep, and a white, haggard face with the pains of the Lost upon it.

"Oh, God! Oh, God!"

"Now's your time, Tracey!" shouted the major, from the rear; "and Heaven help you!"

Tracey turned, just in time to see his senior officer topple over. Those who were not dead seemed mad—firing, cursing, dying! Tracey stood still, with the powder-smoke round him like a haze, his hand clutching the photograph.

The major half rose.

"What in thunder's the matter, Tracey?" he called, weakly. "Tracey! Tracey!" he screamed, and blood choked his last word.

"I'll come!" swore Tracey, but not to the gallant major.

He swung round and faced the hills, and then he turned again and dropped to his knees with an oath upon his lips.

"Gun section! Gun section!" he shouted, but no one heeded. There were but few left to heed, and they did not hear the bugle that was wailing from the rear.

Tracey got to his feet again, and his face was old and lined. "Come back to me," he

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muttered between clenched teeth. "I cannot die. I can't—I'm—afraid."

And he wheeled and ran—ran—like a man possessed, through the blinding smoke towards the cleft in the hillside which led to the valley. And his brain was dead to all but the beautiful face of a girl whose eyes stared up at him in agonized appeal.

He did not even hear the whistle of the armoured train that had just slid into the other end of the valley.

Tracey hesitated for a moment at the valley end of the stony kloof along which he had just travelled in his mad flight from the carnaged trenches. The whining, banging shrapnel was silent now, but the staccato clamour of rifle fire still sped its ominous message through the clear morning air, though the hill in between muffled its transit to the ears of the panting subaltern.

Suddenly Tracey turned and sought the shelter of the patch of thorn scrub that reared its hot spiked leaves amongst the rocks. He sat down on the warm, shaded earth, and with the sleeve of his khaki jacket wiped away some of the blood and perspiration from his face. He was safe now! No bullet could reach him to drive a hole in his throat, as one had just done to his company commander. No shell-fragment could tear the life from his body, as a shell had just served his dear old major. Heavens! How the major had shrieked at him at that last moment when he, too, should have thrust himself to gallant death. And the major had loved him, trusted him!

He was safe! Alive! Almost unhurt! But in his lean, blood-smeared, and powder-blackened face was no sign of relief, no peace of security just attained. Instead, the blue of his eyes reflected something of utter horror. *He*, "Dreadnought" Tracey, as his beloved regiment had called him, had run away—RUN AWAY!—and left his brother officers dead at their posts and his men cursing and fighting to a soldier's death. True, he could not have saved one of them by staying; he could only have died himself. He should have done so; but—he groaned—he could not—*he could not*. His expression changed as he lifted his left hand and disclosed the photograph which he had held in frenzied grip during the last few moments preceding his rush from the murderous trench and the battered remnants of his regiment.

He turned it over, and read on its back the inscription that by now was etched in fadeless letters on his brain. For a few moments he stared at it as a man might stare at the thing for which he had sold his soul, and then he took out of his pocket a piece of oilskin, and slowly and reverently enfolded the photograph in it, and buttoned it carefully away.

Suddenly, outside in the kloof was a noise which sent Tracey's fingers instinctively to his revolver-holster. Footsteps, and the rattle of stones being kicked, and a jingle of spurs. They came gradually nearer, halting, faltering. Tracey's hand dropped from his revolver, and he watched mechanically.

In a minute there stumbled into his line of vision, a few yards distant, a spare man in khaki. He was using his sword as a stick, and blood dripped from him as he walked.

"My God!" cried Tracey, springing to his feet. "Major!"

The staggering man halted, turned, and saw Tracey standing under the thorn bush. He looked him up and down with his glazing eyes, which flickered slightly as they took in the campaign ribbon on the younger man's breast.

"Tracey," he said, in a quiet voice; "Tracey, you're an infernal *coward!*"

He shrieked the last word, and with a quick movement that spent the remainder of his strength he lifted his sword and flung it straight at Tracey's face. And then he slid to the ground.

Tracey stood rigid, as though hypnotized, his eyes on the fallen major, while over his own head, glittering in the brilliant sun, was the hilt of the major's sword, sticking up out of the spiked foliage. And then, with two long strides, he was bending over the fallen man, undoing the collar of his jacket. And he lifted him up as though he were a child, and carried him to the shade of the bushes.

With strong, steady fingers Tracey got to work on the ghastly wound that was draining out the life-blood of the man who had just called him a coward. Tracey winced at the word, which rang in his ears, but the bitter scorn in his major's voice hurt him as much as the taunt. One fact was clear in Tracey's rioting brain—he was done for so far as the service he loved was concerned. The major would see to that. Everyone would cut him. His name, Tracey, would become an epithet—a bye-word. And perhaps *she*—even *she*, when she heard, would—— He forced thought away with a tremendous effort, and concentrated on his task of stanching the major's wound.

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"HE LIFTED HIS SWORD AND FLUNG IT STRAIGHT AT TRACEY'S FACE."

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Five minutes later he sat down on a rock and inspected his handiwork. The wounded man was propped in a leaning position, with his back against a boulder. Around his head was a puttee, and beneath the puttee, soaked in the precious contents of a water-bottle, were the linen sleeves of Tracey's own shirt.

At that instant Tracey's attitude became curiously alert. Rifles had begun to speak again over the hillside, and, amidst the rapidly-growing clamour of small arms, a battery of guns began coughing a peremptory message down at the valley end. And then a steam siren wailed out, and echoed along the kloof-riddled ridges. Tracey didn't move, but he looked at the other man. The major's eyes were open, and he was obviously trying to concentrate his thoughts and gaze upon his junior officer.

"An armoured train, sir," reported Tracey, quietly, "has just arrived and engaged the enemy at Number One Post. D'you hear them?"

"You've stopped running?" asked the major, in a weak voice.

Tracey's face flushed.

"An armoured train's in action——"

The major interrupted him, his voice growing stronger.

"I can hear," he said. "But—there's something—— What did you do it for—*you*, Tracey, the pride of the regiment?" He clutched at his empty sword-scabbard. "Heaven! are you the fellow who crumpled up those two Arabs in that desert scrap? Are you the boy I've loved as a son since you joined the Mess—the one I trusted as no one?" His words grew rapid. "What did the colonel say? 'It's up to Tracey and B Company, and I'd choose him through the whole service for this job.' And I agreed. I backed a cursed coward for a hero's job." He stopped abruptly.

Tracey stood up. He was silent, but his face was grim and drawn.

"I'm talking—like an old woman," continued the major, "because you're—Tracey. But you ran away. Don't stare like that. Say something. Why—*why?* What made you? Speak, man!"

He swayed slightly and put a hand up to his head.

Tracey took two strides, turned about, and came back to his position, facing his senior officer.

"Major," he answered, quietly and distinctly, "I say—*nothing*."

The major glared up at him with savage incredulity.

"What!" he demanded. "You have nothing to say—no excuse, no explanation?"

Tracey nodded.

"But you must have!" cried the major. "One of the 'Fifth' couldn't do that without some reason. What is it? Were you knocked silly?" His eyes took in the blood on his subaltern's brow. "Were you——" He paused for words.

"I was perfectly sane," said Tracey, simply, "and—I make no excuse."

The major's excitement dropped to calm repression.

"You must," he stated, inexorably. His utterance was clear, though difficult. "Tracey—I am—still anxious to—believe anything but that. No one saw, I think—but me. There was no one—left—in our section. Your chance is—to explain. It did not seem to me like ordinary funk, but—even a soldier—is mortal."

Tracey stood calm and straight, but his face was grimmer than ever, and in his eyes was the pain of a tortured animal.

"Major," he repeated, gently, "you must believe—what you saw. I have nothing to say." His voice rang with cold finality.

The major sat silent, swaying slightly with his wound, and in the ears of both, hard and violent on the peaceful air of the sheltered kloof, echoed the muffled rattle of rifle fire and the deep, vicious bark of battery guns. And then a shaking hand fumbled at a revolver-holster, and the major drew out his weapon.

"Tracey," he said, unsteadily, "there is one cartridge left." He held out the revolver. "Let that—wipe out what—I saw."

"Major," replied Tracey, evenly, "not that way."

And the major knew that inflexibility had spoken.

"Then," announced the major, with deliberation, "as there is a God above me you shall suffer worse than that. Your name shall foul men's nostrils, you shall be left only the worthless skin you value so highly, if—I live to speak. Now—go!" And he slipped gently over on to his side, unconscious.

Tracey stood for a moment like a figure cast in bronze; and then he stooped over the fallen man and lifted him up and staggered away into the kloof with his burden, turning towards the valley bottom, where the sun still shone on polished steel rails.

Twenty minutes later Tracey was in the

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big Red Cross tent that flapped its flag in the deep dip a mile to the rear of the hills that masked the scene of action where an armoured train was thundering out its conquering pæan. On a table lay the major, and over him bent the P.M.O.

The regimental doctor was talking to Tracey, while his senior *confrère* conducted the examination.

"The train came up just in time," the doctor was explaining. "It's terrible out there —stretcher parties are not allowed in the trenches yet, and we've been idle all the time."

Tracey heard the words, but did not heed them. The P.M.O. straightened himself and turned round.

"I'm afraid we can't do anything," he announced, quietly. "The shock of the wound and the hæmorrhage—he's scarcely got any blood left."

"Do you mean that there's no possible chance?" asked Tracey.

The P.M.O. nodded.

"Practically none whatever."

"Why 'practically'?" questioned Tracey, quickly.

"The only chance is transfusion," replied the P.M.O. "If we were in — a London hospital, and if we had a willing 'donor,' as we call him, we should, as a last resort, pump some of his blood into the patient. But as this patient requires a tremendous dose, and his condition is somewhat septic, the donor would be as likely to die as the patient."

Tracey coolly inspected the tent, with its cupboards of drugs, its cases of instruments, and its array of surgical equipment. His blue eyes came steadily back to the P.M.O.

"Well," he observed, quietly, "your kit seems pretty complete."

Medical officers and orderlies looked at him questioningly.

"I mean," said Tracey, calmly, "that, with your assistance, I intend doing the rest."

For a few seconds there was a dead quiet, and then the P.M.O. spoke.

"Tracey," he said, "Tracey, you're a brave man, but it is impossible."

"By your own words," insisted Tracey, firmly, "it is not impossible."

He strode forward and stood at the other side of his prostrate major, confronting the P.M.O. The others in the background watched tensely.

"Even if there were time, and your life was——"

Tracey cut the doctor short.

"Heaven knows how long it will be before the wounded come in from the trenches," he said, curtly; "and my life is—my own affair."

"Your life," answered the P.M.O., "is the King's, and it is outside my duty as a Service doctor to imperil it like that."

"The major's life is more important to the country than mine," insisted Tracey; "and —he has a wife and children."

The quiet tent was charged with emotion; and distant — very distant — sounded the deadly obbligato of the guns.

"You say there is a chance of saving your patient," continued Tracey, decisively. "It is your duty as a doctor to take that chance. As much as I can, I insist."

The others stared at the man, young and strong, who in cold blood, without the stimulus of the fight, was calmly insisting upon laying down his life on the precarious chance of saving a brother officer. The P.M.O. looked from the living man to the dying one, and the sheer heroism of the man who could coolly argue his right to make such an amazing sacrifice awakened a responsive strain. Suddenly he put out his hand

"Tracey," he said, in a low voice, "you're the bravest man I've ever met. It's a doctor's duty, as you say, to take the only chance. I will take it."

A long-drawn gasp broke from the onlookers.

"Thanks," said Tracey, with a smile. "Lend me a pencil, orderly." And he took out of his breast-pocket the oilskin packet which held the photograph he had clutched in the trenches, and he wrote upon it.

And in that little tent, far away from the stir of conflict and the glory and heat of battle, Tracey's life-blood began to flow into the veins of his senior officer, the man who had called him a coward and promised to ruin him if he survived.

Four weeks later, within the flapping canvas walls of the Field Hospital at the Division Base, a small group of staff officers stood around a narrow bed upon which, propped up by pillows, lay the convalescent Tracey. At the side of the bed, on a chair, sat Major Belton, his head still swathed in bandages, but otherwise looking perfectly well.

At the front of the group near the bedside stood a little man whose collar bore the badge of a field-marshal, and whose blue coat-front held a double row of medal ribbons, flanked by the red strip of the V.C.

"Captain Tracey," he was saying, "I want

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to say this : In my forty years of active service I have seen many gallant deeds done in the field, but never in my experience have I known one to rank with that which you did in that tent in the Baadjste Valley. It is easy for a man, as we all know, to do brave things in the heat of action, but to perform such an act as yours in cold blood requires a far higher standard of courage. I congratulate a brave officer upon his recovery."

Tracey's eyes shone, and there was a spot of colour on his sunken, yellow cheeks as the G.O.C. and his aides-de-camp moved away. But in the face of the seated major gleamed feelings that could not remain unspoken.

"Old boy," he said, "I'm now going to return to you a piece of your property which you held in your hand—when you left the trenches," and he held out a tattered oilskin packet, from which protruded a photograph.

Tracey stretched out a thin, brown arm.

"I thought *you* had it," he said. "It was in my jacket-pocket."

"Wait," continued the major. "I've seen it. May I look again ?"

Tracey nodded.

The major slipped the blood-stained picture out of its cover. A beautiful young girl stared up into the two haggard faces. The major turned it over.

"Forgive me," he said, simply. "I have read it."

"Read it—again—to me," answered Tracey, in a low voice.

And in reverent tones the major complied. It was the cry of a girl's soul inscribed on the back of her picture.

"Come safe back to me, my beloved. I shall not know peace again until your face bends over me and I look into your dear, brave eyes. For the love of Heaven, *come back to me!*"

Tracey closed his eyes as he took the photograph that had torn his soul in the last few ghastly moments in the trenches.

"Tracey," said the major, deeply moved, "I know of a braver deed even than that which gave me my life. I know what soldiering is to you, and I know what action is, and I know what you are. And," he said, "when you went out of the trench in trying to obey that cry"—he pointed to the inscription on the photo—"you performed the greatest sacrifice of all."

Tracey stared up at the tent roof.

"You did not 'turn down' your country or anything. The position was lost. Nothing you did could possibly have altered it ; but—you sacrificed—your eternity."

There was a moment's silence, and then the major spoke again, and his voice rang firmly.

"But," he said, in clear, distinct tones that rang, "there is this for you to realize : while you stooped down in the trench to recover that picture the 'Retire' sounded."

Tracey rose up in bed, with face no longer pale and eyes no longer drawn.

"Yes, the 'Retire.' Neither of us heard it—consciously—but we did sub-consciously. Until it struck your brain, you thought of nothing but the fight."

"By Heaven!" gasped Tracey, "you're right."

And through his confused brain rang again the bugle-call, the "Retire."

"Major," he said, in low tones, "do one thing for me before you go."

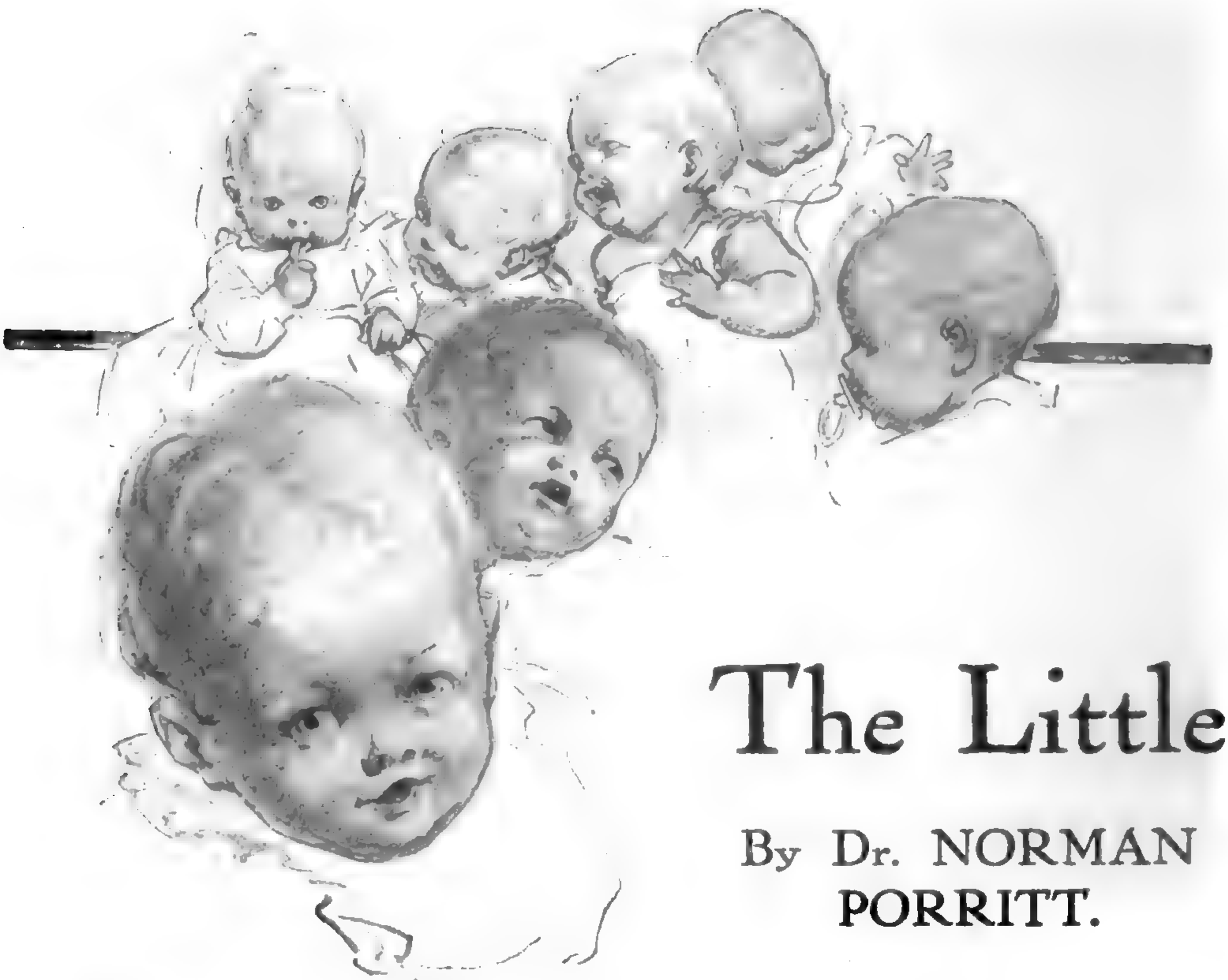
The major looked at him.

"This photograph—at the bottom, below—the writing—you will see some pencil marks—done in that tent. Please—cross them out."

The major took the picture and looked closely. Below the flaming words, "Come back to me!" in pencil, was the answer, "*I cannot.*"

The major crossed it out.

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The Little

By Dr. NORMAN PORRITT.

THE little stranger is either a boy or a girl, but may be both. About once in eighty times the latest arrival comes in couples, though in Ireland there is a double event once in sixty times, in England once in one hundred and ten times. In both countries the latest arrival is a determined and successful Home Ruler. The city most given to doubling is, appropriately, Dublin, where there is a set of twins to every fifty-eight births; the city least given to it being Naples, where the latest arrival does not come in pairs oftener than once in one hundred and fifty-eight arrivals. The incentive of a Royal Bounty does not provoke a triple event oftener than once in six thousand five hundred arrivals. Sometimes, however, they come with a run, as in the case of a Paris baker, whose wife in seven successive years presented him with twenty-one children on the instalment plan of three each year. Not only in France, but throughout Europe, the birth-rate is falling, and we may expect no more epitaphs like that in Heydon Churchyard on the body of William Strutton:—

He was buried on the 18th of May, 1734, aged 97. He had by his first wife 28 children, and by a second 17 children. Own father to 45, grandfather to 86, great-grandfather to 97, and great-great-grandfather to 23. In all 251.

Such quiverfuls surely justify the lines on the grave of a woman buried near Canterbury:—

Of children she bore in all twenty-four—
Thank the Lord there will be no more.

But even these examples look small after the case of the Countess of Henneberg. The story goes that on Good Friday, 1276, a spiteful beggar, whom she had offended, prayed that the Countess might have as many children as there are days in the year. The prayer was answered when the Countess was forty-two years old. All the boys were named John, the girls Elizabeth. One would have called them Legion, if Legend were not so much more appropriate.

The latest arrival loves the still night watches. The favourite hour for arriving is three a.m., an hour ever engraven on infantile memory and selected, reckless of all consequences, as that for instantaneous refreshment, for chewing father's watch, and for being walked round the bedroom in father's arms.

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Stranger.

Illustrated by
Miss L. Hocknell.

If the little stranger fills the parents with joy, its reception by brothers wants the warmth of welcome given by the sisters. The girls hang round the little cherub with a reticence of wondering delight, but the boys are apt to express their feelings in the terms of the little chap who exclaimed: "I'd much rather it had been a parrot."

"What do you think?" one little boy asked a playmate. "The doctor's brought a baby to our house. Isn't it horrid?"

"Rotten. Can't you get him to take it back?"

"No; it's too late. We've used it four days."

A little girl, after relating how God had sent her a baby brother, added, as she thought of the straw laid outside the house in order that the mother might not be disturbed by the noise of the traffic, "And it was well packed."

Another little girl thought it such a pity that when baby arrived mother should be poorly in bed. One of my little patients told his mother after the arrival of a new brother: "When doctor wasn't looking I shook his bag—but I didn't make it cry, mother."

A bright little chap when shown the latest arrival exclaimed:—

"Why, father, it's got no hair!"

"No, it hasn't grown."

"And it's got no teeth."

"They haven't come yet."

"Can't it walk?"

"Not yet."

"But it can talk, can't it?"

"No."

"Don't have it, father. It's a poor one. You've been done."

The late Bishop Walsham How described how a three-year-old boy was taken to see his new sister.

"Where did it come from?" he asked.

"God sent it us," his mother answered.

"Then I suppose it is a sort of an angel?"

His mother explained that it was only a baby.

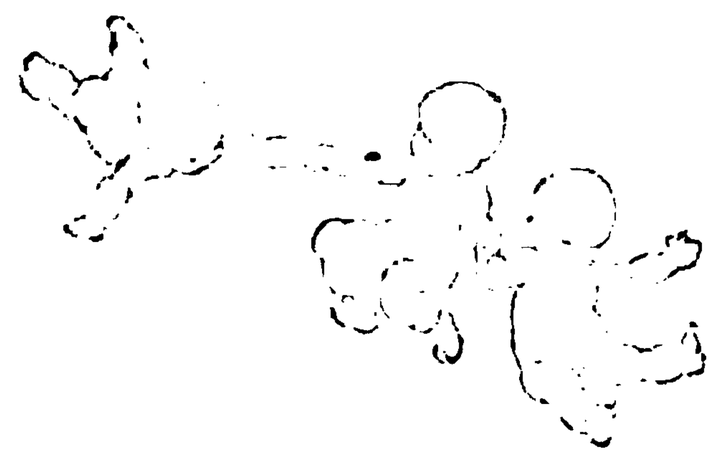
"Hasn't it got any wings?" he asked; and on being told "No," added: "Hasn't it got any feathers at all?"

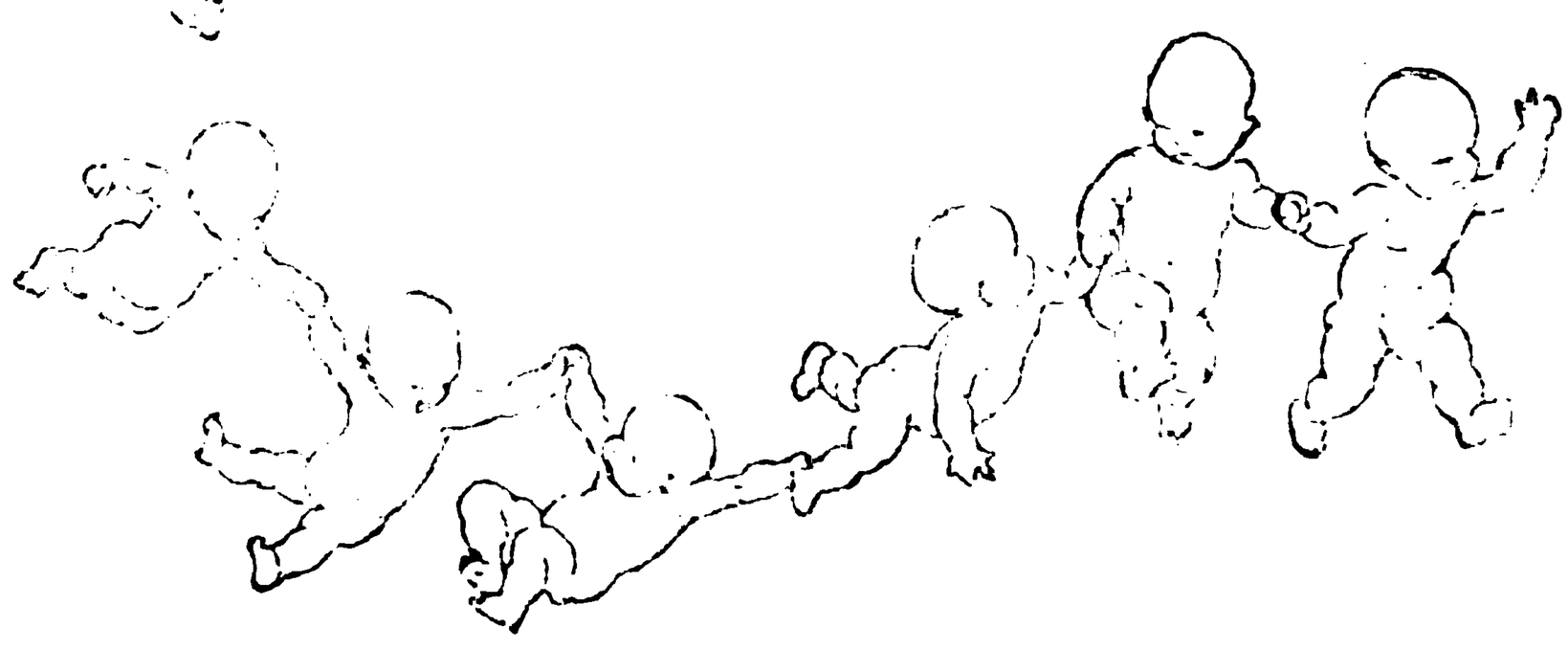
The sister of a cross, fractious baby had been told that the screaming child was sent by the angels.

"Well, mother," she remarked, as the

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mother tried in vain to still the baby's paroxysms, "you can't be surprised at the angels getting rid of it."

Popular imagination invests the latest arrival with certain qualities according to the day on which it arrives :—

Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for its living,
And a child that is born on Christmas Day
Is fair and wise and good and gay.

When a baby smiles in its sleep, we are told by those who know most about babies that angels are whispering to it. Belief in supernatural cherubs, who sit up aloft and keep watch not only over poor Jack but over babies, goes back to the days of ancient Rome. Vatican, or more correctly Vagitanus, was the god who caused infants to utter their first cry ; Fabulinus the god to whom the parents made an offering when the child uttered its first cry ; Cuba the goddess who kept infants quiet in their cots ; and Domiduca the deity who brought young children safe home and kept guard over them when they were out of their parents' sight.

In these modern days Vatican is the only reality, for Cuba and Domiduca find so much to do that from many households they are absentees. And admiring parents, if they do not sacrifice to Fabulinus, when the young darling gurgles or mumbles in its throat, go into raptures at the unprecedented intelligence and loquacity of their infant prodigy.

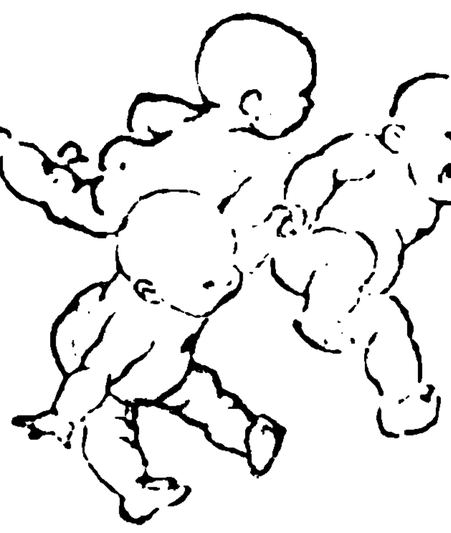
The little stranger is more often a boy than a girl. In England and Wales about seventeen thousand five hundred more boys than girls arrive every year. Of a thousand girls born, nine hundred and four are alive at the end of a year, but only eight hundred and seventy-eight of the same number of boys. The superior vitality of the gentler sex lasts through life, so that the supply of suffragists is not likely to give out. The last census shows that there are one million one hundred and seventy-eight thousand three hundred and eighteen more females than males in the British Isles. The male population must be prepared to be not only out-voted but out-numbered by the gentler sex, for in 1851 there were one thousand and forty-two females to one thousand males. Now there are one thousand and sixty-eight. The lady who, when asked if she wanted a vote, replied, "No, what I want is a voter," will, as time goes on, have more and more difficulty in securing one. The county in which she would have the best chance of doing it is Monmouthshire, where there are only nine hundred and twelve females to one thousand males, and the county where a mere man wanting a wife would have most choice is Sussex, where there are twelve hundred and eighteen females to every thousand males. A baby boy may expect on an average 44·13 years of life, a baby girl 47·77 years. Of one hundred thousand boys born only seven live to the age of a hundred years, a feat accomplished by twenty-four out of the same number of girls. And whereas none of the boys live beyond the age of

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a hundred and five, two girls live to be one hundred and six, and one to the age of one hundred and seven.

It was an Irishman who, after a voyage, said he thought his berth would be his death, and the birth of the little stranger is sometimes tantamount to its death. Ten out of every thousand die on the day of their birth.

One-fifth of the total deaths in England and Wales occur among the latest arrivals before they are a year old. Of every thousand arrivals born one hundred and five never see their first birthday. If the latest arrival chooses an urban district, the risk that he will not have a first birthday is a third greater than if he elects to arrive in a rural district. If the latest arrival can emigrate to New Zealand he will have the best chance of all to survive more than a year. In New Zealand only sixty-eight children out of a thousand born die before the first year, in Australia seventy-five, and in Ireland ninety-five.

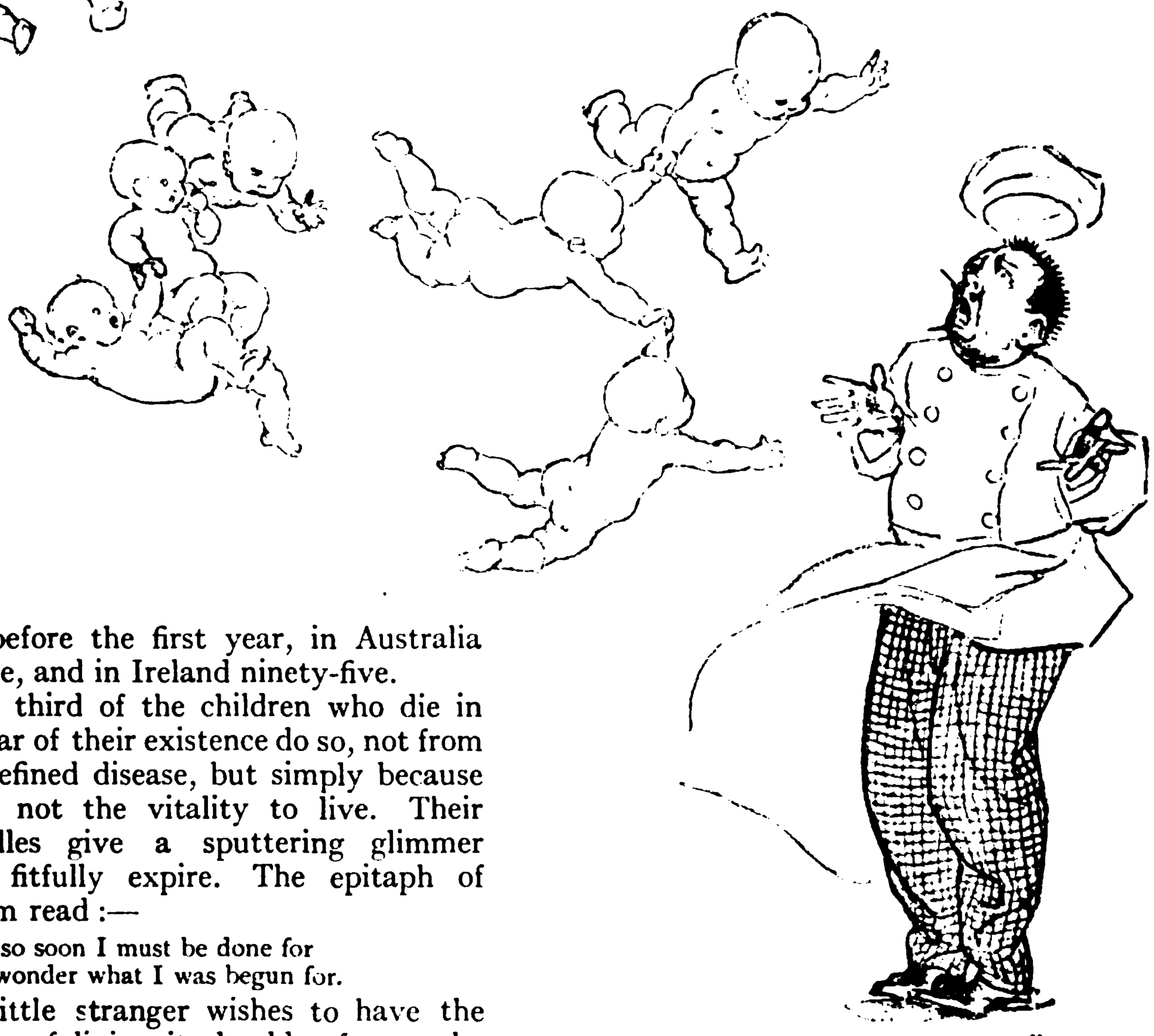


About a third of the children who die in the first year of their existence do so, not from any well-defined disease, but simply because they have not the vitality to live. Their little candles give a sputtering glimmer and then fitfully expire. The epitaph of one of them read :—

> If so soon I must be done for
> I wonder what I was begun for.

If the little stranger wishes to have the best chance of living it should refuse to be hand-fed. Two hand-fed infants in a family of good social position gained thirty-nine and twenty-four per cent. in weight eleven weeks after birth ; a mother-fed baby in the same family gained eighty-four per cent. of its weight in the same period. The deaths among Liverpool babies less than three months old are fifteen times greater among the hand-fed than they are among the mother-fed. Too often, as has been wittily said, the young man of to-day, in taking to himself a wife, marries but part of a woman, the other part being exhibited in the chemist's-shop window in the shape of a glass feeding-bottle.

The little stranger is a provider of problems of which the choice of a name is not the least important. There is a fashion in them. In country districts Bible names—Manoah, Æneas, Joel, Eli, Gideon, Deborah, Ruth, Miriam—are popular. But among those who ape the ways of gentility, the good old-fashioned John and Tom, Mary and Sarah have given place to Gordon, Cyril, Stanley, Doris, Lily, May, Rose, and Daisy. Some families of girls are almost horticultural bouquets. When twins require names, we



"ON THE INSTALMENT PLAN."

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are not all so clever as the father who, having chosen the name Kate for a girl, called the second one Dupli-Kate. A little boy astonished the people next door by declaring that his new twin brothers were to be called Thunder and Lightning.

"Never!" was the reply. "Oh, but they are," was the little chap's retort. "Pa called them that as soon as he heard."

On an occasion when twins arrived in the home of one of my working-men patients I was detained elsewhere. Another doctor filled my place. "Eh, father," said the little five-year-old son, realizing that something like a calamity had fallen on the household, "you ought to have had Dr. Porritt. He wouldn't have brought two." And, of course, we have all heard of the little fellow who, when taken to see the twins, asked, "Which are you going to drown?"

Then comes the happy moment when the latest arrival, in gown and robes preposterously too long for it, the underclothing part being turned up and secured with pins to prevent the little one slipping out, in the arms of its nurse, is the centre of interest in the semicircle around the font. Dean Burgon once refused to christen a male child Venus. "Vanus?" he muttered, aghast, after asking the godparents to name the child. "I suppose you mean Venus. Do you imagine that I am going to call any Christian child after that abandoned female?"



"REFUSED TO CHRISTEN A MALE CHILD VENUS."

The father of the infant urged that he only wished to name it after his grandfather.

"Your grandfather? I don't believe it. Where *is* your grandfather?"

He was produced: a poor old soul of eighty or so, bent double, and certainly not looking the least like the goddess in question.

"Do you mean to tell me, sir, that any clergyman ever christened you Vanus, as you call it?"

"Well, no, sir. I was christened Sylvanus, but they always calls me Vanus!"

Let us hope it may not be the lot of the latest arrival to obtrude where the father, when asked to name the child, answered, "One too many."

In the days of long ago it was the custom for the mother to give her baby boy his first food with the sword of her husband, lightly introducing the nourishment into the baby's tiny mouth on the sword's point. Nowadays the latest arrival must be content with some warm water or a sticky mess of butter and sugar in a teaspoon. It is the rule-of-thumb descendant of Mrs. Gamp who provides butter and sugar, a near relative of her who, when given a thermometer to test the heat of baby's bath, declared she could always manage without such gimcrack things. If the baby

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went red she knew the water was too hot, if the child turned blue she knew it was too cold. Although the up-to-date monthly nurse never goes to her patient without a spring balance to record the latest arrival's gradual increase in weight, there was at one time a superstition that it was unlucky to weigh a baby, and old-fashioned nurses always set themselves against the practice. The first time the little stranger leaves its mother's room it must go upstairs before going downstairs, or it will never rise in the world. Where there is no upstairs those who cling to the practice mount a chair outside the room door, and the future rise of the cherub is assured. In what a large number of cases must this precaution have been omitted! In the West Riding of Yorkshire a baby at the first house it visits receives a piece of money, an egg, some salt, a piece of coal, a match, and some bread. The money is to ensure wealth; the egg, full of meat and goodness, implies that the child is to have plenty of the good things of this life. It typifies the beginning of life, and the ancient Romans always began their dinners with eggs. It may be a relic of the pagan belief that the world was hatched from an egg. Salt confers health. It is a symbol of incorruption and immortality. It was often put into coffins to keep Satan away, and also had the reputation of keeping away witches, for which purpose brewers used to throw a handful into their mash-tubs. It also typifies energy, and signifies that the latest arrival is to take his place among the salt of the earth. Coal ensures comfort and warmth, whilst the match bestows wisdom, and denotes that the little one's life is to be illumined by the light of knowledge; and the bread indicates that the child shall never want for daily bread.



Tradition asserts that to rock the empty cradle is to displace the latest arrival from its proud position, for if you rock an empty cradle you rock a new arrival into it.

The nation cannot take too deep an interest in its babies. We look to them some day to uphold the traditions and receive the glorious heritage bequeathed to us by our forefathers. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," says Wordsworth. The artless innocence, the very helplessness of a child appeals to all but the brutalized, though all do not show their love after the manner of the Norwich labourer on the death of his little son. The bereaved man was found pacing the room with the corpse in his arms, kissing it passionately. When the vicar of the parish endeavoured to soothe and comfort him, the distraught man placed the attenuated form on the bed, saying as he did so:—

"Ah! sir, you don't know how I loved that lill' faller; and if it worn't agin the law I'd have him stuffed, that I would!"

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The Lords of the Fo'c'sle.

By MORLEY ROBERTS.

Illustrated by A. C. Michael.

THE full-rigged ship *Kedron*, 880 tons, belonging to Bristol, was a very notorious vessel, and Captain Joseph Bandy, who commanded her, was equally notorious. He was one of the real old-fashioned sort. He loathed steamships in all shapes except when they were tugs, and even then he regarded them as a last resource. The only kind of ship was a sailing ship; and the only kind of seaman was the seaman of the old days; and the only sort of skipper was the kind of skipper that he was himself.

He was indeed a hairy and ancient aristocrat of the ocean, a violent and preposterous conservative, even in politics, and he had an almighty admiration for lords.

"My notion is," said Captain Joseph Bandy, "my notion is the subordination of so-ciety the same as the subordination of a ship. I expect the men to respect the second mate. I reckon the second mate must respect the mate. And the mate that doesn't respect me, I'll 'oof 'im out of the ship just too quick."

His admiration for lords was well known over all the seven seas. This admiration was truly in his nature, but, nevertheless, its vaster development dated from the day when he actually shipped somebody before the mast in Melbourne who turned out to be a real live lord—although only an Irish peer—on his arrival in England. A remarkable series of accidents made a somewhat tough-looking foremast hand into a member of the ruling aristocracy while the voyage was in progress, and Captain Joseph Bandy never forgot the incident. He read up the nature of the English peerage in an old encyclopædia, and frequently instructed Mr. Sampler, his weary and bored mate, as to the proper titles of the children of peers.

As Mr. Sampler said to Mr. Swaffin, who was the second mate, "If the old man, Mr. Swaffin—to speak disrespectfully, which I must do sometimes or burst—if the old man didn't mollify his love for a lord by sometimes getting so blind and so speechless that he can't speak of them, I should jump overboard or chuck the job."

It was quite true that Captain Bandy was somewhat excessive in drink, although he believed himself to be a sober man. He had taken a pledge of which he was very proud. The nature of this pledge was explained to the second greaser by Mr. Sampler in highly coloured language.

"It's what the old man calls semi-teetotalism," said Mr. Sampler.

"Ah, I see—I see, sir," said the second mate. "I suppose that means being never more than half drunk."

"If it does he doesn't keep to it," said the mate. "But the truth is, I understand it to mean that you make a hog of yourself two ways, Mr. Swaffin. If you want a drink, you have to eat when you don't want to. The result is our skipper's always soakin' rum and chewin' biscuits, destroyin' his poor stomach in two ways, and ruinin' his health worse than liquor would do all alone. I think he's a very sad object, and I shall be glad when he retires."

The firm that owned the *Kedron* was very friendly with Mr. Sampler, and he had the refusal of the command of the ship when Captain Bandy finally elected to retire. Mr. Swaffin, the second greaser, was a new hand, and had not previously sailed in the *Kedron*.

"What's the real reason for the captain being so keen on lords, sir?" he asked one day when they were running to the nor'ard after rounding the Horn, being bound for Portland.

The mate explained the captain's native conservatism, and related the story of Lord Ballyhooly.

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"You don't mean to say he hasn't spoken to you about the nobility?" asked Mr. Sampler.

"Oh, yes, sir," said the second mate, "he's spoken to me about it, but I never thoroughly understood why he'd got that kink in his mind."

"Well, that's the reason," said the mate, "and what's more, the more he drinks the more he thinks of lords, and the more he begins to have a kind of idea that there's another lord aboard the ship. Every time we ship a new crowd he runs his eye across them kind of eager-like, lookin' for a lord. Havin' had one in the fo'c'sle once, he's dreadfully afraid of bein' disrespectful to any of the foremast hands until he's thoroughly sized 'em up. Time and again he's come to me and said, 'That young fellow, Smith, in the starboard watch,' or maybe, 'That fellow Brown, in the port watch, looks very haristocratic, Mr. Sampler. Just run easy with him till we size him up.' Oh, it's quite remarkable—if the hands for'ard only got the truth into their heads of the way he thinks, they'd all be playin' up they were lords, and a holy time we'd have with them."

The *Kedron* was carrying a cargo of general notions to Portland, Oregon, that hard-headed, hard-fisted, notorious port situated far inland up the Columbia River and the Willamette. From Portland she was to load wheat to Liverpool. Now the *Kedron*, take it all round, especially since the skipper had developed his notion about lords, had always been a pretty comfortable ship for the first part of her voyages. Until Captain Bandy had thoroughly sized up the crew his suspicions as to their nobility prevented him being anything else but extremely civil to them. In fact, he kept the list in his pocket of all the men before the mast. He ticked them off as not being peers bit by bit as he ran down his southing. As a general rule, most of them were cut off the list by the time the *Kedron* crossed the line, and few indeed survived when the old ship lost the South-East trades and got into the region of the westerly winds. As the crew said, "We begin by bein' white-headed boys to the old man. 'E's very civil an' polite for a long time, but bit by bit he gets savager an' sulkier with us. An' some of us 'e's civil to a long time."

Of course they gathered gradually what the meaning of it was, and there was great fun in the fo'c'sle in consequence. Every soul in both watches had a title by the time they rounded the Horn. The oldest seamen were mostly dukes, and even the boy had a courtesy title, even when he got a severe kicking for misbehaviour or not being clean. The difference between the beginning and the end of the passage was always so marked that there was a strong tendency on the part of the crew of the *Kedron* to desert at the first opportunity. If there is a place on earth where it is easy to skip out it is Portland, Oregon, for there the boarding-house masters have raised the art of seducing seamen to a very high level. They take the crew out of one ship, dispose them carefully in boarding-houses, take the crew out of another ship and dispose of them, and then, practically speaking, swap crews between the two deserted ships, charging a high price per head for each seaman, and this price is known as blood money.

In the case of the crew of the *Kedron*, they were all desirous of skipping, and the boarding-house masters found no difficulty whatever in denuding the old ship of every soul in her but the officers. When the crew got ashore they spread abroad the character of Captain Joseph Bandy, of the *Kedron*, until every sailorman ashore was fully aware of the fact that if he shipped on board her he was likely to be treated as a lord for a certain number of degrees of longitude, and after that to have no latitude allowed him.

Some said it was much better to have your bad time first and get it over and have a good time to make up for it, while others maintained it was much better to have your good time first, for then you knew you'd got it, and you might be drowned before the bad time set in. The main thing that came out of it all was that every sailor in Portland understood that if he meant to have a good show on board the *Kedron*, should his luck make him one of the crew, it was highly necessary for him to be a lord.

This appealed so much to one particular joker, who was a great friend of the runner at the Portland House, that he actually went down to the library and, to the surprise of the librarian, demanded an English "Peerage," which was produced with some difficulty. Simpkins, the sailorman who inquired for it, was a very bright and lively, and not wholly uneducated, person.

"Now I'm heeled," said he—by which he meant that he was armed for all contingencies if fate made him a foremast hand in the *Kedron*.

And, indeed, it did. The runner of the Portland House had the providing of the *Kedron's* crew. He took some of Simpkins's

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advice and provided the *Kedron* with a fairly good-looking set of men. It was, indeed, a remarkable jest with everybody in Portland, and only the officers of the old ship were unaware of the joke that was being played.

After the usual measly fashion of English ships, to say nothing of American, the *Kedron* was, of course, grossly undermanned. She carried about one man for every hundred tons on her, and a boy for the extra eighty; and whereas to be properly manned she should have had sixteen in the fo'c'sle, she only had eight and a boy—that is to say, four in each watch and the boy thrown in to the mate's or port watch. They got away to sea with a cargo of wheat, and their crew on board—in which Simpkins was the leading spirit—in fairly good order. In spite of Captain Bandy's objection to tugs he was, of course, towed to sea down the rivers, and while they were being towed the skipper was as mild and meek as if he had been a maiden aunt. The "old man" never let an oath out of him, and with the utmost severity instructed Mr. Sampler and Mr. Swaffin to use no bad language.

"They're a very nice-lookin' crew," said the skipper, "very nice-lookin', fine young men—nice-lookin' boys, a very 'andsome lot, quite haristocratic, Mr. Sampler."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Sampler, sulkily.

"We never know 'oo we may 'ave on board, you know, Mr. Sampler."

"You don't mean to say you think these are lords, sir?" asked Mr. Sampler, choking.

"I wouldn't be surprised at anything after Lord Ballyhooly," said the skipper, taking a drink. "You do as I say, and be very civil to them, because it's accordin' to my principles that you should be, until you know 'oo they are an' where we are. I remember with joy that Lord Ballyhooly was such a good sailor that I never 'ad a cross word with 'im. And what's more, 'e asked me to dinner at the Caffy R'yal, and I went, and 'e did me very well and shook 'ands with me, too, when I left."

This was his great pride. He felt as if he, too, were a member of the aristocracy, or that the clasp of the hand of his late able seaman, Lord Ballyhooly, had at any rate been as good as a knighthood.

When they passed Astoria, rounded Point Adams, and said good-bye to Oregon, they stood away to the south under all plain sail. Now, as it was the homeward passage the mate's watch was on deck. Among the port watch was Simpkins, and he was at the wheel. Captain Joseph Bandy was exceedingly polite to him, not wholly to Simpkins's surprise.

"And what's your name, my man?" said Captain Bandy.

Simpkins hesitated, and smiled somewhat haughtily.

"The name I shipped under, sir, is 'Simpkins,'" said Simpkins, still with that reserved and haughty smile. And Captain Bandy looked at him in the most interested manner.

"Oh, the name you shipped under is 'Simpkins'?" he said, and walked away to the starboard rail of the poop. "A very fine young feller," said Captain Bandy; "the name he shipped under is 'Simpkins.'" Then he turned. "What's your real name, Simpkins?"

"If you please, sir, I'd rather not say," said Simpkins, with a very delicate air. "It would disturb my family to know that I'd been a common sailorman."

"Ah—I see," said Captain Bandy. "Very well, my man, I won't press you for it." But he was delighted with the situation, and felt sure that he had here another real lord.

When Simpkins's trick at the wheel was over he went for'ard, and while working about the deck for the remainder of the watch imparted desirable information to his mates and gave them some interesting advice.

The next seaman that the skipper tackled was a young and lively Cockney ruffian from the purlieus between Brook Street, Shadwell, and the river.

"What's your name, my man?" said the skipper.

"It's Lord—I mean Johnson, sir," said the East-end boy.

"If you mean 'Johnson,' why do you say 'Lord'?" asked the skipper with a sudden start.

"It was a mistake, sir. It was a name I shipped under, but my family's very per-tickler, and wouldn't like to know I was a sailorman."

"Ah," said the skipper, who, by this time, was three parts cocked. "Very remarkable! Very well, if you regard your name as confidential I'll ask you nothin'—unless you like to confide in me?"

"I'll think of it, sir," said Johnson.

The next seaman said his name was Baron—no, he meant Wilkins, and the skipper was overjoyed. He went down below and took more drinks with himself, and congratulated himself on his luck in having so many members of the nobility on board. He even woke up Mr. Sampler to impart his wonderful suspicions.

"Three members of the 'Ouse of Lords

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'ere already," said the skipper in an awestruck whisper. "I know 'em. I couldn't be mistaken. By associatin' at the Caffy R'yal with Lord Ballyhooly I got to know the tone of the haristocracy. Mind, Mr. Sampler, that you're very civil and respectful to Simpkins, and Wilkins, and Johnson."

"Very well, sir," said Mr. Sampler, with difficulty restraining his wrath at having to be very civil and respectful to three of the men for'ard.

"I 'ave my eye on another," said the skipper. "A very big, hairy man, Mr. Sampler."

"What, *him?*" said Mr. Sampler "You don't think that rough and tough and hairy chap, Guppy, is a lord, too?"

"Oh, lords are frequently hairy," said Captain Bandy. "I've seen a portrait of a dook who was awful hairy. Nothin' shaved about 'im—whiskers, beard, moustache—oh, altogether very hairy."



"'AND WHAT'S YOUR NAME, MY MAN?' SAID CAPTAIN BANDY."

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Now Guppy was, indeed, a very strange-looking ruffian, but, like Simpkins, he had a gift of humour, as he told the crowd for'ard in the second dog-watch when they were having an awfully fine time and enjoying their titles.

"And," said Guppy, "I've got ambition. I always 'ad, mates. There's nothin' low about *me*. I ain't content with bein' a poor, bullied seaman, every man's dog. 'Hogs, dogs, and sailors' is a good motter for many, but it ain't my motter, and I likes to rise. Why, there's Simpkins there, a bright young chap, but got no ambition—'e's a common lord. And then there's another—you, Johnson, bein' a baron. Why, a baron's a low-down kind of lord! I'm goin' to be a earl or a dook. Blowed if I won't be a dook; that's the top notch."

Accordingly the next day he walked past the skipper with his nose in the air. This attitude he considered most suitable for a person of his lofty rank. The skipper asked him humbly what his name was.

"It's Dook—no, I mean Guppy," said Guppy, still retaining his lofty air.

"Ah," said the skipper, "I begs your pardon, Mr. Dook—I mean Guppy."

"Pray don't mention it, sir," said Guppy. "I may be tempery come down in life, but I knows my dooty." With that he touched his forelock and went about his work.

That evening, in the second dog-watch, Captain Bandy imparted the news to his officers.

"This is a most remarkable trip," said the "old man," engaged vigorously in carrying out a pleasing form of his pledge of semi-teetotalism—that is to say, he drank rum which was no more than half water. "This is a most remarkable trip, and my luck's extreme. One member of the 'Ouse of Lords was very wonderful, but 'ere we 'ave four or five. Guppy's a dook, Mr. Sampler."

"A what?" asked Mr. Sampler.

"A dook," said the skipper.

Mr. Swaffin burst into laughter.

"'Ow dare you laugh, Mr. Swaffin?" inquired the skipper, angrily.

"I beg your pardon," said Swaffin, with more respect.

"An' well you may beg it," said the skipper. "Me, your captain, and me tellin' you—I say Guppy's a dook. Most remarkable! Very like the Dook of Suffolk, now I thinks of it. 'E's a very fine moustache. I've seen 'is face in the papers."

"What are you goin' to do about it?" asked Mr. Sampler. "Are they goin' to sleep aft and have no work to do?"

"It goes against the grain to make the 'Ouse of Lords work," said the skipper. "It's notorious they does no work to speak of, bar settin' in their crowns and scarlet robes in soft seats in the 'Ouse, with a screw of ten thousand a year. No wonder they gets tired of it at times and comes to sea. They're a noble race, full o' work and energy," sighed the skipper. "Oh, they're fine young men!"

"I suppose if the rest of them turn out to be lords too," said Mr. Swaffin, "that you and I and Mr. Sampler will have to do the work, sir?"

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that," said Bandy, thinking it over. "It's well known that peers 'ave an 'igh sense of dooty, maintainin' the rights of property with both 'ands full of it, to say nothin' of what they're settin' on. All I say to you is to use 'em gently, rememberin' what they are. Speak civil, don't swear, and I wouldn't be surprised but what the Dook asked us to dine at the Caffy R'yal too, all of us."

After which he retired to his cabin.

Mr. Swaffin and Mr. Sampler looked at each other.

"Does he really believe it, Mr. Sampler?" asked the second greaser.

"He does," said the chief mate, with a groan.

"Oh, it's horrid," said Mr. Swaffin. "To have to be respectful to the crowd for'ard! I suppose I've got to go to that infernal young ruffian, Wilkins, and say, 'Oh, Mr. Earl'—or Duke Wilkins, or whatever it is, and whatever your name is—' would you be so good as to be so kind as to be so obliging as to go up aloft with a grease-pot and grease down the t'gall'n' mast?' Is that the kind of way we've got to behave, Mr. Sampler?"

"No, I'm hanged if I behave that way," said Sampler, "not for any skipper on earth or on sea. My game is this——"

"What?" asked the second mate, eagerly.

"When the skipper's on deck we'll be civil to them, and when the skipper ain't on deck let them look out for thunder-squalls," said the mate.

"Right-o!" said the second mate. "That suits me. They may think they're buckos, but they ain't. Oh, not much."

For twenty-four hours or so the aristocracy of the fo'c'sle thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and the remainder of both watches took counsel as to what titles they were to hold if the skipper asked their names.

Now, a man cannot go around posing as a lord without becoming somewhat lordly in his behaviour. This has been noticed

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frequently in places like Monte Carlo, where bogus earls and peers are found more frequently than good luck. But the only things that Simpkins knew of them were gained from his being somewhat of a newspaper reader, and the conduct of some of the young lords in the House of Commons—though he did not understand how a lord got into the House of Commons—put him somewhat off the track. He became very haughty and rude, and so did the others. It worked very well indeed while the skipper was on deck, and somehow or another he now managed to be on deck a great deal.

He had suspicions that the mates were not likely to behave exactly as he desired. Consequently during the day he was mostly on the poop, and kept on crawling up at intervals during the night in order to see that the peers were not imposed upon. Consequently, until the *Kedron* was just about the Horn, in the neighbourhood of Diego Ramirez Islands—known to old-fashioned seamen as the Daggarramereens—the dukes and earls and marquises, of whom there were now two in the port watch, had a very glorious time. The mates spoke to them with great civility, and begged them to do their work, and all the time their wrath rose, although it was suppressed.



"HE WALKED PAST THE SKIPPER WITH HIS NOSE IN THE AIR."

The first part of the passage home had necessarily been in very fine weather, and, indeed, as it was summer time off the Horn it was also fine there. However, when they hauled up for the nor'ard and the Falklands it began to blow a heavy gale, and things had to be done in a rather more lively and perhaps uncivil fashion. When they reefed the main-topsail, the second mate at the weather earing had a barney with Duke Guppy, who was tending to the dog's ear.

"You miserable swine!" said the second greaser, "why don't you pull? Put some beef on it, or I'll boot you off the yard."

"You'll do what?" asked the "Duke."

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"Boot you off the yard," said the second mate in a fury, looking as if he would do it.

Now Guppy by this time had really begun to think he was something of a duke, and he grew very sulky. He said, "If you talk to me like that, Mr. Swaffin, I shall complain to the skipper."

Whereupon the second mate laid hold of the lift, jumped to his feet on the yard, and put his boot under the ear of Duke Guppy and raked his ear up and down with the toe of it. Such surprising conduct to a member of the aristocracy inspired Guppy with a certain horrible fear that the second mate would actually do what he said. He cried out, "Oh, sir, don't; please, sir, don't boot me off the yard." Whereupon the second mate resumed his position and the weather earing was passed satisfactorily.

Nevertheless there was great trouble in the fo'c'sle when the watch went below. They held an indignation meeting, and considered whether a deputation of the Maritime Peers should be sent aft to the skipper to complain of the Commons. They decided to do it and appointed Simpkins, Johnson, Wilkins, and Guppy himself to go aft and interview the "old man." They found him on the poop, and requested a few words with him, which he granted in the civillest manner.

"Is there anything you 'ave to complain of?" asked the skipper.

"Yes, sir," said Guppy; "we've come to complain about the conduc' of Mr. Swaffin on the main-topsail yard this forenoon watch. 'E threatened to boot me off of the yard, sir."

"What? Threatened to boot you off the yard!" said the skipper. "'Ow 'orrible!"

"An' me what I am," said Guppy, tapping his chest as if he kept his patent of nobility there, perhaps his certificate as a duke.

"Ah, an' you what you are," said the skipper, respectfully. "Do I understand you, Mr. Guppy?"

"Yes, sir," said Guppy, in great hopes that the second mate would catch it hot and strong in a few minutes, "you *do* understand me. I've never concealed my persition."

"Nor I, neither," said Johnson.

"Nor me," said Wilkins.

But Simpkins stood modestly silent as if he were the only native aristocrat among them.

"I'm very sorry to hear of this," said the skipper.

"An' so will Lord Ballyhooly be when I tell 'im," said Guppy. "Lord Ballyhooly told me what a fine ship this was, and 'ow well behaved all the officers was, an' it'll be a great disappointment to 'im to think, when I meet 'im in the 'Ouse, that things were different in 'er from 'is time."

"Do you know Lord Ballyhooly?" asked the skipper.

"Well," said Guppy. "'Im an' me 'ave boxed together many a time. 'E shoots at my castle reg'lar."

"Does 'e, indeed?" said the skipper.

"An' I don't wish you to be too 'ard on Swaffin," said the Duke; "only we should like you to point out to 'im that although at the present moment we're sailormen, we've never been accustomed to be treated in that kind of way – threatened with bein' booted off the yard, an' 'avin' your starboard ear rubbed up an' down with the toe of a sea-boot."

"'Oly Moses!" exclaimed the skipper, "you don't say he did that?"

"Oh, didn't he?" said the Duke. "But I won't put up with it."

"You sha'n't," said the skipper. "I shall speak to Mr. Swaffin. You can go for'ard now, gentlemen—if that's the right way to call you?"

"Oh, it'll *do*," said the Duke. And with that they bowed somewhat haughtily and retired.

Captain Bandy walked up and down the starboard side of the poop for a few minutes considering what he should do in these unparalleled circumstances, and finally called Mr. Sampler into consultation.

"Look 'ere, Mr. Sampler, Mr. Swaffin 'as been threatenin' to boot the Dook off the main-topsail yard. It's most unparalleled conduct, and can't be put up with. There'll be questions asked about it in the 'Ouse, as sure as sea-boots is sea-boots and dooks is dooks."

"Dukes may be dukes, but I don't believe Guppy's a duke," said Mr. Sampler, insubordinately.

"Didn't you see 'ow 'e behaved to me?" said the skipper. "Wouid any foremast 'and that wasn't a peer behave free to a captain—a part owner, too? I tell you 'e's a peer, and Mr. Swaffin and you 'ave got to behave to 'im and the others in accordance with your dooty. Just get Mr. Swaffin up 'ere—I'll 'ave a talk with 'im."

"It's Mr. Swaffin's watch below, sir," said the mate. "He'll be fast asleep now."

"I don't care whether 'e's fast asleep or fast awake," said the skipper. "Disrespect to a deputation of the peerage in the fo'c'sle ain't goin' to be put up with by me. Send for 'im, Mr. Sampler."

Mr. Sampler himself roused out the second

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"'AN' ME WHAT I AM,' SAID GUPPY, TAPPING HIS CHEST."

mate, who came on deck in a perfect blazing fury, perfectly determined to be disrespectful to the whole House of Lords if he met them in Westminster Hall or Westminster Abbey, and equally determined to say whatever he chose to the skipper, who, from the maritime point of view, was of far greater importance than any peer.

Before they went on deck Mr. Swaffin laid hold of the arm of Mr. Sampler and said, desperately :—

"Mr. Sampler, this can't go on."

"It can't," said Sampler; "but what are we to do about it?"

"Oh," said Mr. Swaffin, "do? I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go on strike."

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"On strike?" said the mate. "What do you mean—refuse duty?"

"I mean that," said the second mate. "The old man's old and dotty. All he knows about navigation he's forgotten. Half the time he's so blind he don't know a plus from a minus, or longitude from latitude. Now, you and I will do no more if this goes on. Are you in with me?"

"I am," said Mr. Sampler, desperately.

They went on deck together.

"What's this I 'ear about your bein' disrespectful to the Dook?" said the skipper, as soon as Swaffin's head came in sight up the companion.

"I was disrespectful to no duke, sir," said Mr. Swaffin, "but I threatened to boot that blackguard Guppy off the main-topsail yard, and for two pins I'd go into the fo'c'sle now, drag him out by his ears, and boot him fore and aft for the next half-hour."

"You're insubordinate," said the skipper.

"I am," said the second greaser, desperately, "and I mean to be."

"You mean to be!" said the skipper. "Oh, this is very remarkable."

"More remarkable than the House of Lords in the fo'c'sle," said Swaffin, with increased disrespect. "But we're not going to put up with it, sir."

"Not goin' to put up with what?" said the skipper.

"To put up with lords in the fo'c'sle," said the second mate. "There ain't going to be any lords in the fo'c'sle any more. Mr. Sampler and I have made up our minds there ain't."

"Holy sailor!" said the skipper. "What do I 'ear but insubordination and mutiny!"

"Right you are, old cock," said the second mate, in an increasing rage. "Mr. Sampler and I are going to do no more until you disestablish that House of Lords for us, and so we tell you. Ain't we, Mr. Sampler?"

"Yes," said Mr. Sampler, desperately, feeling that something must be done, or that he would indeed go mad.

"Do I 'ear aright?" asked Captain Bandy, sadly. "Oh, I seem to 'ear as if it were a kind of whisper in the far, far distance that my mate that 'as been with me these years is threatenin' insubordination an' mutiny—refusin' dooty—goin' agen the articles of war, so to speak, and threatenin' to disestablish the 'Ouse of Lords."

"That's me," said Sampler. "We'll do no more till it's been disestablished."

"I orders you not to," said the skipper.

"Order what you like," said the second mate, "but nobody's bringing it. Come, Mr. Sampler, come down to my berth; I've got a pack of cards there. Let's have a little game of nap all to ourselves while Captain Bandy runs the ship, for I've done with it."

"And so've I," said Sampler.

With that they left the skipper planted almost as fast as if he was a bollard, or the fore-bitts, and went below. It was a horrible situation, and Captain Bandy felt that it was such. He was between the devil and the deep sea—between his mates and the House of Lords of his own creation. He felt like a king who had been deserted by his army, and had nothing to rely on but an odd duke or two, to say nothing of a baron and an earl and a marquess and two or three courtesy lords of no particular distinction. For ten years at least he had sailed with Sampler, who had dry-nursed him—to say nothing of wet-nursing him when the rum got on top—for many, many thousand miles of variegated ocean.

"I don't know what I'll do without 'em," said the skipper. "'The 'Ouse of Lords ain't to be relied on for navigation—that I'm sure of if I'm sure of anything. I never 'eard of a dook or a marquess that was good at navigation, though Lord Ballyhooly was a very good sailorman. But as he owned freely in the Caffy R'yal he knew nothin' whatever about navigation, and didn't know a member of the haristocracy as did. I'll take a drink on it."

He took a drink on it—and took two on it—and took three on it. By the time he had taken so many that he could count no longer he felt happier in his mind, although the ship was running very hard with the wind on the starboard quarter and making pretty heavy weather of it.

"I think I'll appeal to their better feelin's," said the skipper. "I might take a gun to them, and agen I mightn't. I've a kind of notion young Swaffin might take it away from me, bein' very quick an' me bein' old. I'll appeal to their better feelin's."

He went down below and tapped at the second mate's door.

"I go nap," said the second mate. "Come in! I go nap."

The skipper put in his head.

"I appeals to your better feelin's," said the skipper—"to say nothin' of the law."

"Law be jiggered," said the second mate. "There you are, Mr. Sampler, that's my trick."

"I appeals to your better feelin's, Mr. Sampler," said the skipper, humbly.

"Haven't got any better feelings," said

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Mr. Sampler, who was angry at having lost three successive games.

"Then won't you help me to navigate the ship?" asked the skipper.

"We won't," said the second mate. "Ask your dukes. Now, please, do shut the door, sir—there's such an awful draught coming in out of the alley-way."

"I'm the worst-treated skipper that ever was," said Bandy, with peculiar humbleness. "Oh, Mr. Sampler, and Mr. Swaffin, do 'elp me out, becos the 'Ouse of Lords don't know no navigation."

"Oh, do shut the door, Captain Bandy," said Swaffin, with great irritation; "there's a draught coming round the corner that cuts my ears off."

"I can't help it," said the skipper, desperately. "I can't stay on deck day and night myself. If you're down here playin' cards together an' refusin' dooty, who's to run the ship?"

"Let her run herself," said Sampler.

"Let her run herself under," said the second greaser. "I'd as soon be drowned as be civil to a crowd for'ard, and a crowd that makes a fool of you, sir."

"Oh, this is dreadful 'earin'," said the skipper. "I've either to lose the ship and my precious life and the cargo and my forty years' reputation, or else be uncivil to Lord Ballyhooly's friends—'im as treated me so nicely at the Caffy R'yal."

"That's what you've got to do," said Swaffin, "and you can take your choice—and you take your choice quick, so don't make a song about it."

"I never was spoken to so before," said Captain Bandy.

"You'll be spoken to a great deal worse than that presently," said Swaffin, viciously, "if you don't shut that door."

"I—I——"

"Yes," said Mr. Sampler, eagerly, perceiving signs of weakening in the captain.

"I gives in," said Captain Bandy, gloomily.

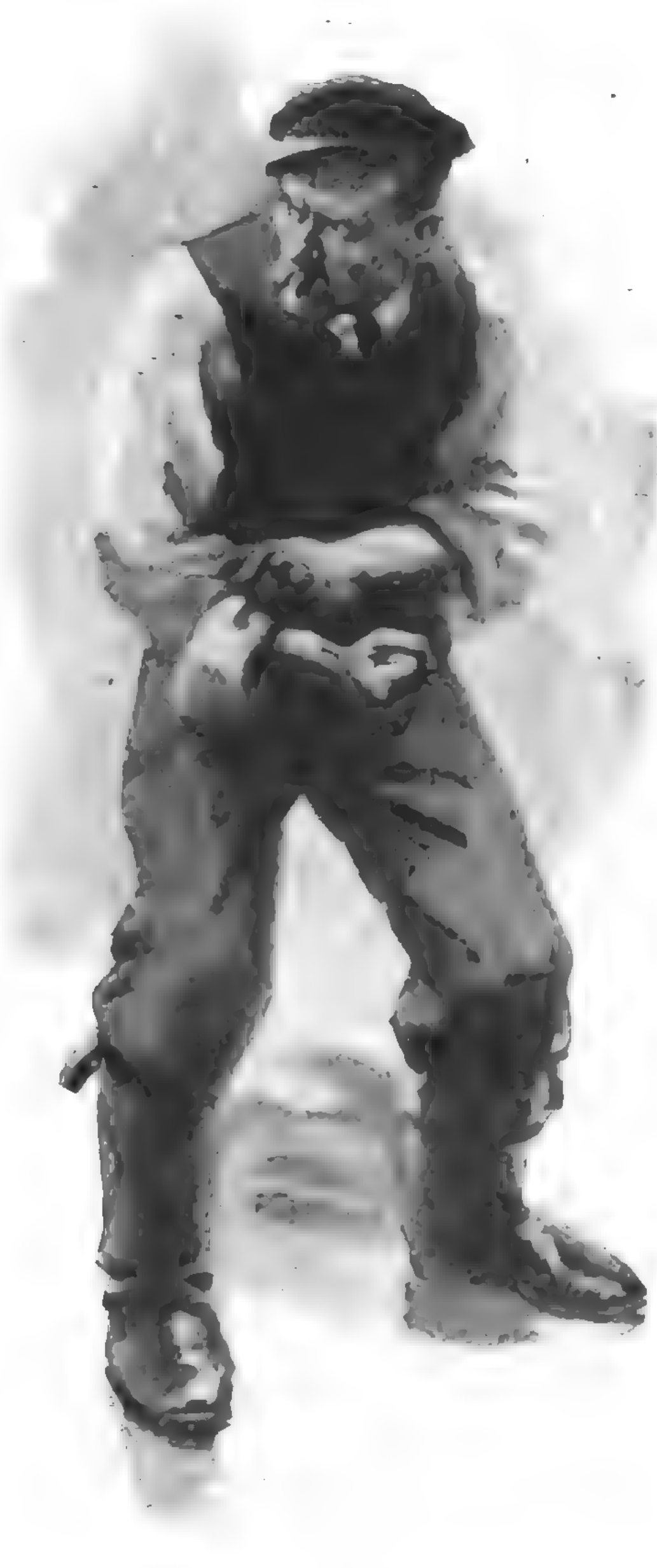
"You do?" said the second mate.

"I do," said the skipper.

"And we can treat the dukes for'ard in good, proper sea fashion?" asked Mr. Swaffin.

"It can't be 'elped," said the captain; "but be merciful to 'em. Remember 'oo they are—especially Guppy."

"Oh, especially Guppy," said the second mate, who had removed his boots to play cards. "Oh, *especially* Guppy!" And with that he put his sea-boots on again, turned up the cuffs of his sleeves, and went on deck. With a bellow like a bull he fetched all hands out and roared: "Send Duke Guppy aft. I'm going to be merciful to him. Oh, especially Guppy!"



"SEND DUKE GUPPY AFT. I'M GOING TO BE MERCIFUL TO HIM."

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Can Putting be Improved by Practice?



A discussion in which six open golf champions, a billiard expert, a famous juggler, a croquet champion, and other authorities take part.

Illustrations by Tom Wilkinson.

AT the first blush this looks like a foolish question. It casts doubt on the universally accepted truism—"Practice makes perfect." But a little reflection seems to justify the question. Putting, though in a measure analogous to other feats of skill, is really a thing apart. Variously described by golfers as an inspiration, or, in the language of profanity, "the devil," it is, in many ways, a law unto itself.

A thousand things are concerned in the golfer's putt—club, ball (no two are exactly alike), turf, slope of ground, wind, weather, to mention half-a-dozen of the more obvious. As the varieties of each of these are legion, those who are sceptical about the value of putting practice can easily convince themselves that they waste their time in practising putting.

But, contrarily, there are those who see in all this the greater need for practising putting. Countless instances could be quoted of the good effects of practice on putting. One, chosen for its uniqueness, must here suffice.

A well-known American, R. F. Foster, an authoritative writer on bridge and other card games, and a great theorist at golf, says that as the result of daily drawing-room practice he reckons to hole out in one putt on nine of eighteen greens after an approach. His method of practice is to putt into a cup laid on its side, commencing at two feet away and increasing the distance a foot at a time until the extreme limit of the room is reached.

Doubtless there are those who would like to know also the secret of laying nine out of eighteen approaches within an area the size of a room. Such must be referred to old Bob Ferguson, or the ancient of days, whoever he was, who said that there should be no "putting" in first-class golf, for the approach shot ought always to be laid within a few feet of the hole.

In order to give pause to those who deny that there is any analogy between putting and billiards, attention is called to the fact that good billiard-players are almost invariably good putters. S. H. Fry and C. Hutchings may be cited as good examples. The same niceness of touch required for billiards is required also for putting.

That the question at the head of this

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article is no foolish one is shown by the divided opinions of golfers thereon. On few golfing subjects do opinions so differ. And it may be taken that Vardon, Ray, Braid, Taylor, Hilton, and Herd represent by their opinions an equal number of sections of the golfing community who hold these several views.

His experimental knowledge of other games analogous to golf and his proficiency as a golfer are an earnest that A. C. M. Croome's views of this subject will at least be not ill-balanced. Through the eyes of one who is only a billiard-player the golfer may seem to putt unduly badly; the croquet-player and the curler may think much the same. But one who combines in his own person a practical knowledge of all these games will take a juster view. Mr. Croome writes:—

It is seldom profitable to argue by analogy from other games to golf. Billiards, croquet, and curling, in which the thing aimed at is to remove a stationary object to a fixed point unhindered—and unaided—by the opponent, form the only profitable field of comparison. In all four games practice of an individual *coup* is valuable proportionately as conditions make mechanical accuracy possible of attainment. The billiard-player is most fortunate in his opportunities. His implements, table, balls, cue, are practically perfect. He, therefore, having taught himself by practice to make certain of doing this or that shot in one billiard-room, is justified in being surprised when he fails in another to bring it off. His experience is bound to make him an uncharitable critic of golfers' putting. Mannock on his first visit to a golf course was deeply impressed by the driving, but wondered why, when the ball was within ten yards of the hole, "you always rolled it up before putting it in." He and his kind would probably attribute frequency of failure at holing to insufficient practice. A curler will be more generous. He knows how one rink differs from another, and even from itself at times. He also knows that, although some improvement is bound to come from persistent practice at "leading," which corresponds on the curling pond to putting on the golf course, it is better to devote solitary practice to the acquisition of a good style in the delivery of the stone than to the attainment of mechanical accuracy in one particular shot. So it is with putting. It is quite easy to practise on the drawing-room carpet. But you may hit a saucer every time overnight, and take three on many greens next day.

As it is the billiard-player chiefly who takes the golfer to task for his faulty putting, who throws down the gauntlet, as it were, and incites him to give more attention to practice, it will be well to let a billiard-player "take the honour" and speak before those he challenges. Though more or less in retirement of late, C. Dawson was at one time much in the public eye as one of the best and most stylish cueists in the ranks of professional players. He knows a bit about golf, too, and is quite sure of his answer to the question, "Can putting be improved by practice?" Here it is:—

In my opinion, if a golfer practised putting for three hours a day for three or four years he should become almost as proficient on the putting-green as the billiard professional at the spot stroke or losing hazard. At any rate, he would become a very much better putter than without such practice. I have no doubt of it.

In putting one has to take into consideration the undulations and also the differing nature of turf. In billiards also similar difficulties are met with, for on different tables the strength and angle thrown from a cushion vary when a ball is struck.

Some years ago I was engaged to play an exhibition game against J. P. Mannock, at Dorking. The room in which the billiard-table was set was usually used for dancing. As is customary at the commencement of a game, we took the string for break. In each case the ball went into the left-hand bottom pocket, and in doing so rebounded several times on and off the bottom cushion. This is one of the vagaries with which the billiard-player must contend.

In putting, as in billiards, strength and calculation are essential factors of every stroke. These can be acquired only by persistent practice.

I practised the spot stroke for years for five or six hours a day before I made my record break of 1,848 (613 consecutive spot strokes). Look what practice in this particular stroke has done for W. J. Peall! Playing against myself, he compiled a break of 3,304, during which great run I did not have a stroke for a day and a half.

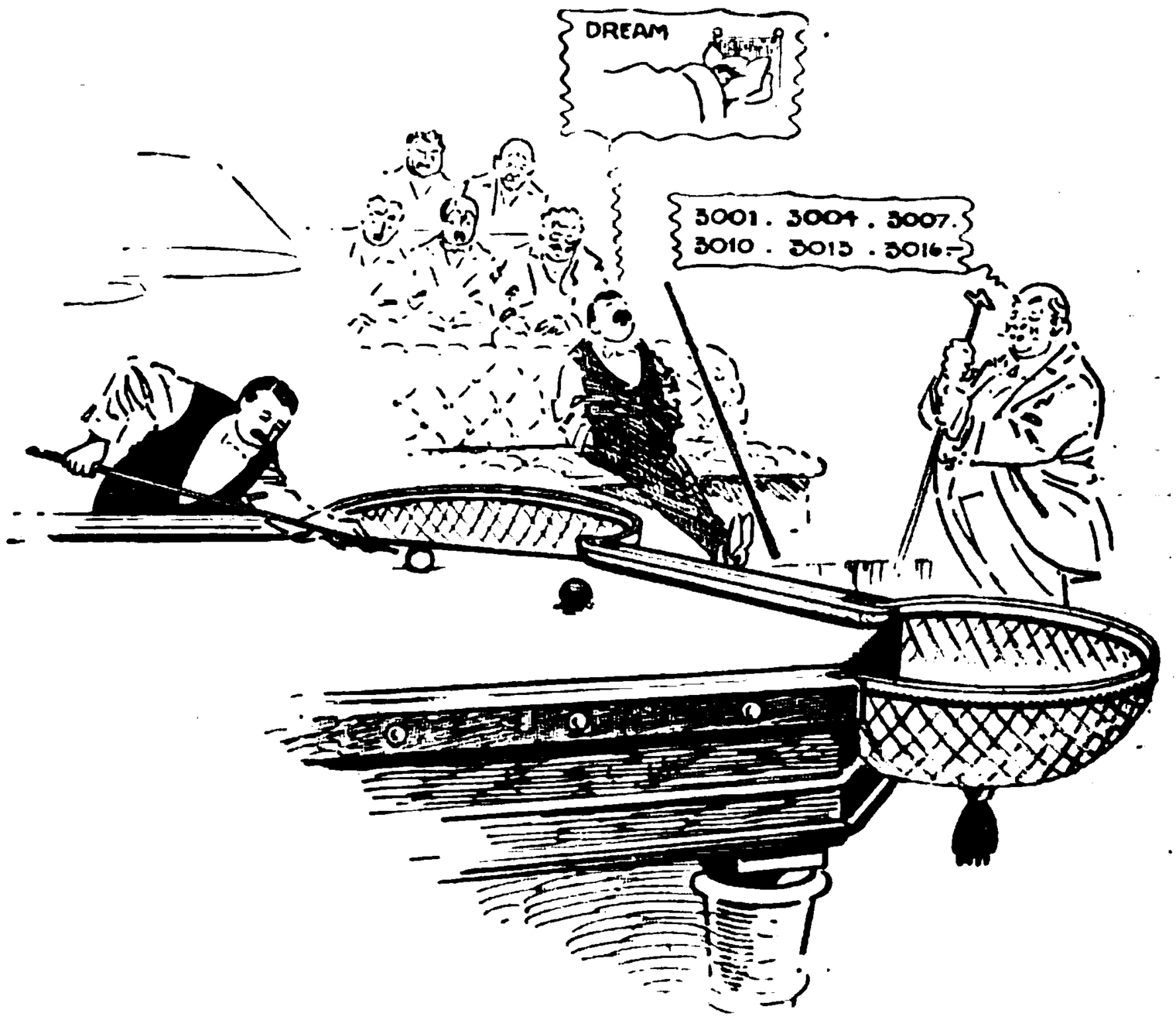
In professional billiards a tricky shot missed and a game thereby lost is followed by a course of practice until the particular stroke is mastered. Why should not golfers do the same with putting?



"YOU MAY HIT A SAUCER EVERY TIME OVERNIGHT, AND TAKE THREE ON MANY GREENS NEXT DAY."

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"HE COMPILED A BREAK OF 3,304, DURING WHICH GREAT RUN I DID NOT HAVE A STROKE FOR A DAY AND A HALF."

E. Ray, the present open golf champion, replies :—

In my opinion, and where the *advanced* golfer is concerned, no good can be obtained by practising putting ; but in the case of the *beginner* it is otherwise, putting practice is undoubtedly beneficial, for he must acquire the art of judging distances, search for "borrows" on the greens, and generally learn by experience what he will probably soon forget. Putting is an inspiration, a psychological question, and therefore a difficult proposition. I am firmly of the opinion that the best kind of practice is, not to spend an hour on the nearest green, but to put our skill or our nerves to the test by playing in as many competitions as possible.

For some reason, not always easy to explain, we can most of us putt decently when there is no particular need for it—that is to say, when nothing of any great importance hangs on the result · but no sooner are we called upon to produce of our best than we are found wanting in the one phase of the game that is all-important. Therefore, I repeat that the more competitions we can take part in the better practice do we obtain. Even assuming that greens were perfectly level and true, and that as much practice was devoted to putting as to billiards, I am sure it would be found impossible for the golfer to reach the same state of perfection obtained by billiard experts.

The conditions are so different ; the wind is an important factor in putting ; even the manner in which the green has been cut has an effect on the stroke played. But the chief difference lies in the fact that the putting green is so much bigger than the billiard-table. In the case of the latter the player has both the objects in view, whereas on the putting-green the player must first take a look at the hole, then fix his gaze on the ball, and finally endeavour to strike the latter correctly and with the right amount of strength. If all greens were true, naturally more putts would be holed ; but there is no possibility of discovering the perfect green.

I have known players to putt in the manner employed in croquet, where the player faces the hole, so to speak, but their putting was no better for doing so. Even if a croquet-mallet type of putter was permitted, we should not fear the opponent who used it. A club cannot bring perfection ; everything rests with the player.

Harry Vardon, many times open golf champion, views this question with different eyes from Ray. He writes :—

When I declare that putting most certainly can be improved by practice, the reader may be inclined to ask why I did not put this belief to the test during



"THE BEST KIND OF PRACTICE IS TO PUT OUR SKILL OR OUR NERVES TO THE TEST BY PLAYING IN AS MANY COMPETITIONS AS POSSIBLE."

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"IN THE DARK OF THE EVENINGS I USED TO SCRAMBLE OUT AND PRACTISE PUTTING UNTIL NIGHT FELL."

that long and wretched period in which I missed almost as many short putts as the average player would crowd into a lifetime.

In the first place I should like to say that I sacrificed not one single opportunity of adjourning to a green armed with a putter, or sometimes two or three which seemed suited to the purpose of knocking the ball into the hole. What with teaching, playing matches, and looking after the work of the shop, the golf professional has a fairly busy day and little leisure for ordinary practice. But in the dark of the evenings I used to scramble out and practise putting until night fell and the hole was no longer visible. I am sure that this assiduity was not wasted. Its reward, though long in coming, was the greater when it did come.

It may be reasonably argued that just as putting is different from everything else in golf, so is the short putt of a foot to a yard and a half different from the long putt.

To take the short one with consistent success you need in your constitution a very happy blend of confidence and care, plenty of the former and just a seasoning of the latter. Of the two qualities, confidence is the harder to retain, for it is such a tragedy to miss short putts, and directly you do start to miss them you are apt to become nearly panic-stricken.

I have come to the conclusion that the best plan is not to worry much about the slope of the ground for the little shots. At times, of course, it is necessary to "borrow" something, but there is nothing easier than to fall into the habit of becoming unduly impressed by the degree of the slope when a short putt has to be negotiated. This is a prolific cause of failure to hole short putts.

In the case of the long putt it is much easier to be confident. For you do not expect to hole it. At any rate, you are not overpowered with the feeling that you ought to hole it and that it would be a disgrace not to do so. Then, also, you have the sense of security that even if you do play the putt badly you still have one putt left.

It pays handsomely to practise the long putt of from ten to twenty yards. If you can lay the ball six inches from the hole time after time there is little need to bother about the short putts. There is always something to be learned in the pursuance of this ideal. In time you develop a sort of instinct which tells you at a glance the pace of the green with undulating ground. Though the putting area is small, there is much to be studied therein.

J. H. Taylor, another member of the historic golfing triumvirate, and open champion on several occasions, is not in agreement with Vardon. His answer to the question, "Can putting be improved by practice?" is as follows:—

What I am about to say will, doubtless, be received with derision, but I say it with the full consciousness of what it means, that practice, except so far as it is competitive, is of little real value.

This statement may seem astounding and heretical, but if the reader will kindly bear with me I think I can make out a good case in support thereof.

To make my meaning quite clear, I will admit that practice will undoubtedly enable the player to execute the putt in a mechanical manner which will give him satisfaction; but the real test of the merit of any given stroke is its satisfactory performance under stress of competition. To play stroke after stroke perfectly in practice is an alluring sort of pastime, but "it cuts no ice," as the Americans say. The player may think he has mastered the intricacies of the game, but is he going to reproduce the same skill in competitive play when his mental apparatus is at high pressure and all his faculties alert? If not, what real or abiding good has his practice done him? To win matches and competitions a player must be able to rely on playing his strokes as he does in practice.

During the purely elementary period of his pilgrimage the player will find ordinary practice beneficial. During this period he will learn, more or less correctly, how a stroke should be made. But playing a stroke



"THE BEST OF ALL MEANS TO THIS END IS A TIRELESS AND PERSISTENT OPPONENT."

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"JAMES BRAID IS THE SHINING EXAMPLE OF WHAT PRACTICE AND PERSEVERANCE CAN EFFECT."

when nothing special depends on it and then when pitted against an opponent who is pressing one hard are two totally different things. Experience alone, often very bitter, can teach a player to succeed in the latter circumstance. The brain is stimulated and the nerves steeled, the player learning that initiative and control without which he can never go far.

It is the brain, of course, that controls and directs the operation, and I have a theory that may appear fantastical, to the effect that when the brain is rightly keyed to the object in view the desired result will be obtained, even though the stroke be not played according to the book. Each stroke played has an individuality all its own, different from its predecessors and different from all succeeding ones. Nor is the putt an exception. Every putt is different from its fellow — another reason for saying "No" to the question which forms the title of this article. This individuality was given to the stroke by the brain at the moment of inception, and the same characteristic can never occur again.

School the brain to its highest golfing function, and school it early. And the best of all means to this end is a tireless and persistent opponent. Practice will undoubtedly aid the muscles to respond more readily to the player's will, but that inspiration which, after all, is the foundation of all good strokes, can come only through the medium of competitive play.

It is not surprising that James Braid is a believer in, and advocate of, putting practice. Indeed, it would be passing strange if he were otherwise, for is he not *the* shining example of what practice and perseverance can effect in transforming a bad putter into a good one? And Braid, unlike his old rival, Taylor, is free from abstract fancies, but, like Taylor, Ray, and Vardon, he sets considerable store by "competitive practice." Here are his views :—

Putting can be greatly improved by practice, provided there is method in such practice. It is of little use going out on to a green with a number of balls and putting at the hole by oneself. After a very few minutes interest will begin to flag and carelessness substitute itself for concentration. The fact is that solitary putting of this kind is seldom interesting enough to absorb one's whole energies and attention.

The best method is to practise on a green or lawn on which a number of holes have been laid out, in company with another enthusiast as opponent. To obtain the greatest benefit from practice the competitive spirit must be predominant.

Personally, I recommend that the practice should take place on slightly rough and bumpy ground, as this teaches the player to hit the ball truly if it is to run anything like straight. Moreover, after this sort of practice the player is always more likely to putt better

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on going to smooth and keen greens ; at least this has been my own experience, just as it has been my experience that I always find a difficulty in putting well on slow greens after playing on fast ones.

I have heard that a famous billiard-player says that there is no reason why a player who would practise putting three hours a day for three years should not become so expert as to hole out in one on almost every green. Personally, I have never come across anyone who has been bold or patient enough to try the experiment. But I am convinced that, however much and sedulously one practised, one would still be a long way from achieving such a measure of proficiency. In fact, I consider it practically impossible.

My own theory is that the nerves must be calm at the moment of hitting the ball. If this is so, the player generally putts fairly well.



"SOLITARY PUTTING OF THIS KIND IS SELDOM INTERESTING ENOUGH TO ABSORB ONE'S WHOLE ENERGIES AND ATTENTION."

Those of us who have watched H. H. Hilton, one of the two most renowned of living amateur golfers, at work on the putting-greens will be eager to learn what he thinks. Few players can have experimented so with their putting. Has he not confessed somewhere that in the course of a single round he tried some thirteen or fourteen different styles of putting, including the one-handed method, in his endeavour to discover the whereabouts of the hole? Well, Hilton takes a middle view ; it is neither "Yea" nor yet "Nay." He says :—

I candidly believe that a great number of golfers could improve the general standard of their putting by assiduous and methodical practice. But, on the other hand, there are a certain number of players who would find such a course of procedure of little or no use to them when they came to play in a serious match. In the excitement of the moment they would forget the scientific principles evolved in practice and instinctively fall back upon the methods most natural and easy to them. To my mind, it would be easier for a man who had taken up golf late in life to carry out the scientific theories evolved by careful practice than for one who had played from boyhood. There is always a strong disposition for those who have commenced the game early to revert to the methods and mannerisms acquired in youth. Assiduous and methodical practice in the art of putting must of a surety do more good than harm, but whether the benefits accruing would compensate for the labour involved is, to my way of thinking, a very open question.

As regards my own case, I do not believe that assiduous practice would be of any service to me. The good and evil of my work upon the greens is almost entirely dependent upon my powers of quick concentration.

Alex. Herd, open champion in 1902, and winner of the *News of the World* tournament in 1906, has no doubts on the subject. Though, on his own confession, a bad putter himself, he is emphatically of the opinion that putting can be improved by practice. He thinks :—

Very few golfers give enough time to practising putting. The professional is seldom seen practising on the greens. His attention is given to driving and mashie shots. And yet good putting means so much. It inspires the player with confidence and helps him to play the other parts of the game better. A bad attack of "jumps" on the green should be followed by some serious putting practice. But, so far as professionals are concerned, it seldom is. An hour's practice every day for six months would work much improvement in a player's putting.

I should start with long putts, giving close attention to back swing and easy follow-through, for one cannot tap the ball and putt well. For this form of practice I should use twelve balls. After this I should turn my attention to putts of one to three yards. It is really wonderful what a lot of putts can be holed if you take pains and study the putts. Vary your practice by putting on different greens. No two are alike. Three greens—one flat, one undulating, and one where it is necessary to "borrow"—would make a good variety.

I believe a well-known billiard-player thinks that some such practice as three hours a day for three or four years would result in the player holing out in one on practically every green. Quite impossible, for the simple reason that the ground would not let him. Billiard-tables are not like greens, where worms shove their noses up in the line of your putt, where undulations are to be negotiated, and where small stones from near-by bunkers deflect your ball. Then the golfer has weather conditions to contend with—wind and wet. No, you can practise putting till Doomsday, and you'll never learn to hole out in one each on every green.

With the mallet-putter, now barred, putting was much easier, I'm sure. You looked down the line of

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"CINQUEVALLI, THE PRINCE OF JUGGLERS, DID NOT ATTAIN HIS EMINENCE WITHOUT ASSIDUOUS PRACTICE."

the putt and also swung more accurately. I made a putter of an upright build for one of my members at Coombe Hill for swinging between his feet, pendulum-wise. I have tried it. For long putts it is no use, but for three-yarders and downwards it is absolutely deadly. The only reason I do not adopt this putter and this style of putting is that brother pros. might hand me a few rotten eggs.

The marvellous, even miraculous, feats performed by the juggler and equilibrist as the result of long years of patient practice and hard self-denial should give the golfer to think seriously. Has he any right to say that putting cannot be improved by practice, when he is a stranger to the kind of practice which brings the juggler his success?

Cinquevalli, the prince of jugglers, did not attain to his eminence without assiduous practice. And his view of this question naturally tallies with his own experience. He says:—

My opinion is that any game which requires skill, precision, or accuracy can only be improved by practice. Practice is as absolutely essential in this instance as oil is to the smooth running of an engine. It took me eight years of almost daily practice to perfect my feat with billiard-balls, and I still have to practise this to keep it in perfection.

Things that are like unto the same things are like unto one another, and if there is an analogy between billiards and putting, there must be an analogy between croquet and putting, for croquet has often been termed lawn-billiards.

Cyril Corbally, many times croquet champion and the pioneer of the now popular pendulum stroke, says:—

Putting by first-class amateurs and professionals has always struck me as being extraordinarily good, except in holing out at serious moments, and then it is wondrous how futile it can be. Players usually brilliant are then overconscious of the dangers of mistiming, slicing, or pulling, and miss putts that a child would easily hole.

I believe that, no matter how nervous they might be, such lapses would be unknown if they putted in the pendulum style. In this style the player faces the line of play, the movements of the club are along it only, and the face of the club is at right angles to it throughout the stroke. The player is behind his gun, and should easily sight the line. During the stroke the club always faces the same direction, so that timing is nearly unimportant, and the tendency to pull or slice very slight. The whole movement is so natural that it is bound to give confidence. As the mallet-putter is barred, a putter with a vertical lie and short shaft is best for this method.

When croquet rose from its ashes some twelve years ago many of the leading players used the golfing stroke (known as "side" in croquet parlance). Now only one or two use it. The rest have mended their ways or lost their lead. Modern players play the pendulum stroke between and outside the feet, and so accurately that the game has become too easy, and the Croquet Association will have to make it more difficult. In this connection it has actually been suggested that players should play the "golfing stroke"! Perhaps the croquet stroke would have the opposite effect on the putting-green.

One other opinion may be quoted, that of Dr. W. G. Grace, who has drifted from the cricket-field to the quieter backwaters of golf. He says:—

I am sure practice has improved my own putting, but I do not pretend to know anything about golf, save that it is a good game.



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Two in a Cabin and an Ebony Stick.

Being a Study of Three Characters.

By F. THICKNESSE-WOODINGTON.

Illustrated by Tony Sarg.

A VERY large lady was slowly climbing the gangway to the first-class deck. The crowd on the wharf began to call out their farewells to those on board. The old quartermaster, who had charge of the deck-chairs, was hanging over the rail watching the ascent of the last passenger and criticizing her appearance with the freedom of an old salt, and a stewardess at his side was chuckling at his rude remarks, while together they watched the slow approach of the colossal passenger.

"Guess she's booked two berths," said the quartermaster.

The words seemed to strike his companion with a shock.

"Oh, lor'! I believe she's No. 54!" she cried, in dismay. "And it's a top berth. My word, quartermaster, how are we going to hoist that up every night?"

"Who's the other one?"

"Oh, a little bit of a thing as big as my thumb."

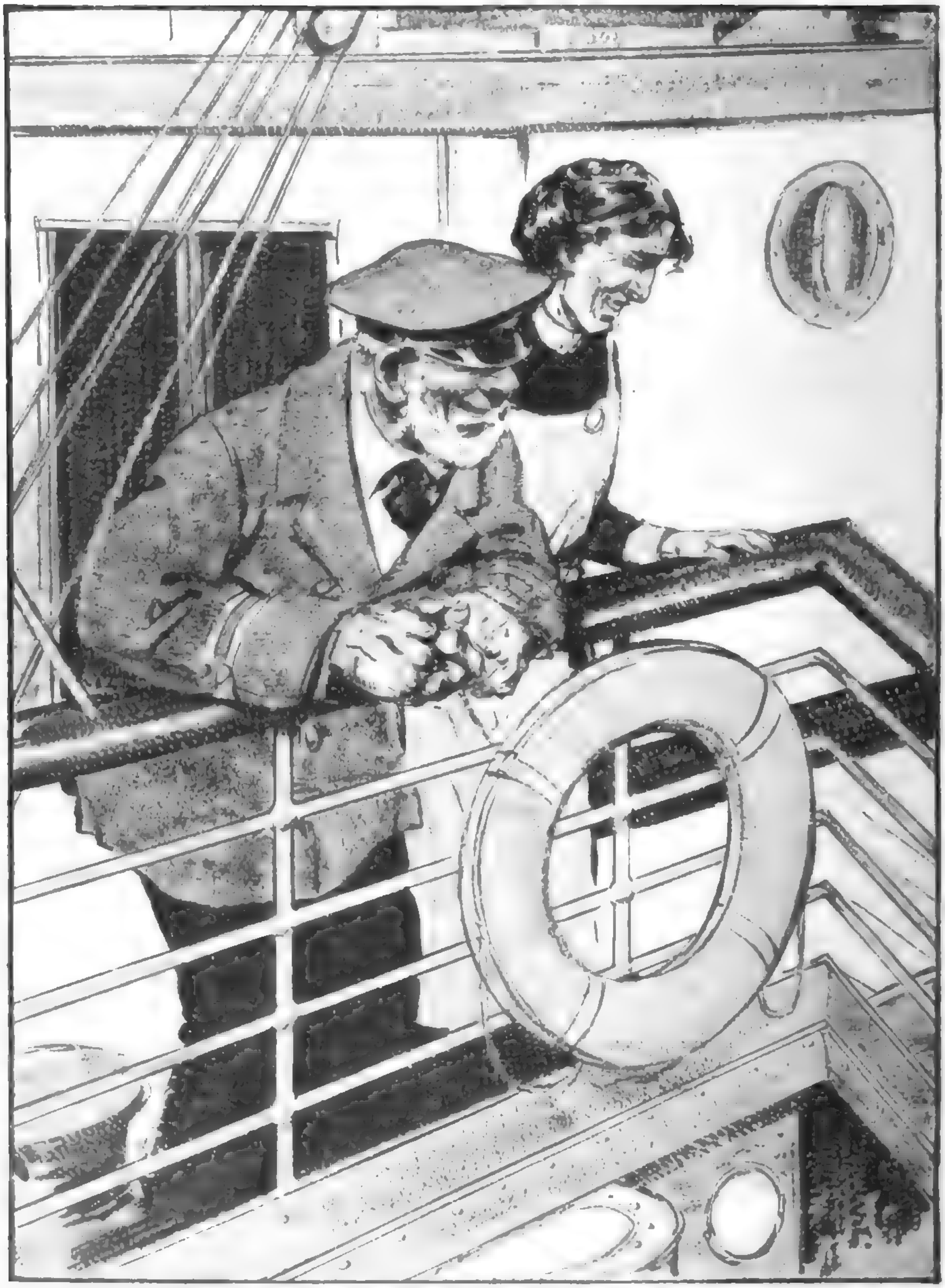
"I know; blue serge and red tam-o'-shanter; feet no bigger'n a baby's. To see 'er stand on 'em wi' half a gale o' wind blowing is a treat you don't forget in a long while."

"Are you the stewardess for No. 54?" The voice matched the body. A deep, affable bass rolled out the words with unctuous condescension. A large, hard blue eye fixed the stewardess and waited for an answer.

"No. 54? Yes, madam. Is that your luggage going down? Then, if you'll follow me, madam, I'll show you your berth." With a despairing glance at the quartermaster and a vicious tightening of her thin lips, the stewardess walked forward and led

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"THE OLD QUARTERMASTER WAS HANGING OVER THE RAIL WATCHING THE ASCENT OF THE LAST PASSENGER AND CRITICIZING HER APPEARANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF AN OLD SALT."

the way down the companion stairs to the long row of double-berthed cabins running through the centre of the ship. They took some time getting down, for the lady's size was an obstacle to progress, and the commotion usual to a large steamer starting for a fresh port filled the passages and stairways with a throng of excited people.

The door of the cabin was jammed open by an enormous brown trunk, which blocked the entrance.

"Is this your luggage, madam? I am afraid you won't be able to have it in the cabin. You see, there is another lady——" She broke off, seeing the floor still further encumbered. "Ah! you have a cabin trunk."

"Ah, yes, of course; but unfortunately

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I can't let that box go down the hold, as I am constantly wanting things out of it. Now, what can we do? Can't you propose something, stewardess?" The hard blue eye looked at the hard-set mouth and the two gauged each other. The silent contest lasted some seconds. The passenger suddenly melted into an ingratiating smile; her large hand burrowed among the folds of her dress and brought forth a purse. With two fat fingers she prodded the stewardess on the arm.

"I am an old traveller," she said, with bland amiability, "and I rely entirely on your kindness and discretion." Something passed from one hand to the other.

"It can stand round the corner by the bathroom," said the stewardess, with a thin smile; "and if there's any bother about it I'll get the purser's clerk to put it in his store-room, so that you can get it whenever you want. Thank you, madam." She called the cabin steward, and between them the trunk was placed in the position indicated.

"Now, which is my berth? Oh, good heavens! not the top one! My good woman, I shall never be able to get up there! Who shares this cabin with me?"

"A young lady, madam—Miss March."

"Ah! Young and unmarried. Is she anything like my size?"

The woman's grimness was not proof against her sense of humour. She laughed and answered with the familiarity of her class, "Oh, lor', no, madam! By the side of you she's no bigger than a mouse."

The lady instantly took off her massive black hat and laid it on the lower berth, close to the dainty pink nightgown-case.

"Thank you, stewardess, then I think that will do. I will settle with the young lady, and we will change berths."

"Well, madam, perhaps she will, as there is only a fortnight left for the run home; but, of course, she was first comer, and she's had the cabin all to herself up till now."

"Yes, yes. Thank you, we will settle it all very nicely together." She slowly pivoted round, and the stewardess had to retire for want of space.

The woman stood looking at the closed white door. "Well, I'd like to know how you're going to manage it," she muttered. "I see faces enough to know something about 'em, and Miss March ain't got that square chin for nothing. She's made me cave under before now, and it ain't often I find my master." With a laugh and a shrug she went about her business.

Inside the cabin the new-comer was shaking down and arranging matters to her own satisfaction. The lower berth was now covered with cloaks, skirts, the contents of a dressing-case, and such things. The large lady smiled at her reflection in the long, narrow glass over the basin. "My usual luck," she said, aloud. "My name's not Alice Hamlyn if I can't get my own way with a young girl, especially if she's as small as that woman inferred; size carries weight, and is useful occasionally. Ah! those black-headed pins are just what I want for my skirt. I couldn't get any in Naples. Pins are always common property when travelling." She took three. "Evidently a tidy young creature," she went on, continuing her soliloquy; "would do for a soldier's wife. That's a very handsome brush-bag. I must get the pattern. Now, I wonder where those chocolates are? Chocolates will make all smooth with a young girl." She arranged everything to her satisfaction, leaving the lower berth well covered with her garments and a formidable starched *sac de nuit*, but, with all her doing, she had finished at last and no one had come to disturb her solitude. Seven strokes had sounded long ago from the little travelling clock which hung upon a nail, and suddenly she was startled by the boom of the dinner-bell. Cabin doors banged, hurrying feet rushed past; the usual stampede took place which precedes a meal on a large ocean liner, and Mrs. Hamlyn smoothed her rotund form with a hungry sigh.

"Extraordinary that she hasn't come down to dress!" she ruminated, with a frown. "Everything depends on the first encounter. Of course, a bad impression *might* be given if she came in alone and found—however, everything will be cold, and I must go up." She opened the door and followed a belated passenger to the dining saloon.

Five minutes later the cabin door opened and a curly blonde head looked cautiously in. Dismay, wrath, and determination passed in quick succession over the face of the new-comer as she pushed the door wide and stood looking about her.

"Well, of all the——" Words apparently failed, but if Mrs. Hamlyn could have seen the clear hazel eyes darken and flash she would have had doubts as to the efficacy of the chocolate drops she had taken so much trouble to unearth from the bottom of the big brown trunk. The tiny figure with the stormy face stood perfectly still, while the busy brain was deciding on the best plan to circumvent the enemy. Molly March, aged twenty (but

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"WITH TWO FAT FINGERS SHE PRODDED THE STEWARDESS ON THE ARM."

apt to delude strangers into the belief that she was seventeen), was perfectly able to take care of herself. She grasped the situation in a glance, and with a sudden nod of decision she rang the electric bell, and with a smooth brow awaited the answer to her summons. Twice she had to ring again, for the stewardess was taking advantage of the dinner hour and a clean bill of health among "her ladies" to enjoy a breath of fresh air and a chat with an acquaintance on the steerage deck. To her a messenger came running to say No. 54 was ringing like mad. She found Miss March in an advanced state of undress, taking out her nightgown from its pink sachet.

"Lor', Miss March, I thought you was at table! Are you ill, miss?"

"I have a headache and am going to bed. The new passenger has evidently mistaken her berth. You should be more careful about the numbers, stewardess, and then you wouldn't have all this trouble. Kindly put her things on her own bunk, will you, and then go and get me a tray. You'd better find out first what's for dinner, and bring me

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the menu. Food's the best thing for a headache, and I'm very hungry."

The stewardess was of a rebellious disposition, and apt to rule her passengers with a rod of iron, calmly pocketing handsome fees at the end of the voyage with an untroubled conscience; but, as she had said, long and varied experience on the Australian run had taught her a good deal about human nature, and a side glance at the firm face with its aureole of yellow curls showed her it was useless to resist, so she complied, and returned meekly to the cabin with the menu in her hand. Miss March, sitting up in bed with a blue silk dressing-jacket round her shoulders, gave her orders in a regal manner and enjoyed an excellent dinner. She was about to order a final cup of coffee, when the stewardess remarked, with a curious intonation, "They've finished dinner in the first saloon, and half the folk have gone on deck."

Miss March promptly removed the blue jacket and returned the tray with a droll look in her eye.

"My head is much better," she said, gravely, "and I will try to get to sleep before the new lady comes to bed. Any attempt at conversation would bring it on again."

The grim propriety of the stewardess suddenly gave way, and she laughed aloud.

"Have you seen her, miss?" she asked.

"Yes," admitted Miss March, with a trill of wicked mirth. "I was coming down with the crush when the boat started, and I was just behind you. When I saw the lady was coming here, into this cabin, I turned and fled!"

"She says she's an old traveller, and I believe her, but I think she's found 'er match this time, miss; though, if I was you, I don't know as I wouldn't liever have that weight below me than above." A sudden noise without made her change her tone. "Well, I'll wish you good-night, miss, and I hope your headache'll be better in the morning."

It was a false alarm, but Miss March turned her face to the wall and the woman withdrew.

Meanwhile Mrs. Hamlyn, having eaten her dinner with the large appetite of the abnormally stout, began to look about her, wondering which could be her cabin companion. She asked her table steward if he could point out Miss March, but the man looked vague and was not sure; so Mrs. Hamlyn made up her mind that she would go up on deck for a little blow before turning in. Her ample meal had renewed her confidence in her usual luck and the chocolate drops, and she felt at peace with the world. At a little after nine she resolved to go down. The cabin was in darkness, and Mrs. Hamlyn, feeling for the electric button, indulged in her usual audible soliloquy.

"Ah! I shall be able to get undressed before she comes down. I dare say if she's alone she's got a little flirtation on hand; these long voyages generally—where *is* the button? Ah, that's it!" She switched on the light, and the next moment a startled exclamation, hastily checked, testified to her astonishment at the changed scene. In dead silence she stood staring at her own property piled on the upper berth and at the mass of golden hair on the pillow beneath. As the head never turned, and the shoulders moved with the regularity of a person in a sound slumber, there was but one inference to be arrived at. Nevertheless, Mrs. Hamlyn continued to stare as if fascinated, and the longer she stared the more unconvinced she grew. She nodded a nod of large comprehension at the back of her silent companion, and, with a slow sigh of resignation, proceeded to clear her berth and undress. The steps were already in position, and at last the portly figure began heavily to climb the steep ascent to her own resting-place. At the sound of the nervous "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" which accompanied the performance, Molly's heart began to melt, and she turned a remorseful face towards the ladder at the foot of her berth, but at the sight of an elephantine white leg disappearing over the edge of the upper bunk she turned her face with alacrity to the wall and shook noiselessly for five minutes.

"There, now, I can't reach the button! Who's to put the light out?" These remarks, delivered in a small, peevish voice, remained unanswered. The voice rose again, with a touch of stubborn obstinacy in it.

"I cannot climb to the ceiling in the dark, and I don't mind a light all night so long as it does not inconvenience anyone else."

"Is anything the matter? Are you speaking?" came in clear, round tones from below her.

Mrs. Hamlyn leaned ponderously over the side, trying to see the speaker. Molly trembled at the ominous creaking.

"I'm afraid I've aroused you in spite of the pains I have taken to be quiet. I find I have got into bed without putting out the light, and I cannot reach the button from here."

"Oh, is that all? I'll put it out in a jiffy." Click! the cabin was in darkness.

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"Thank you so much," continued Mrs. Hamlyn, blandly. "I do so regret having awakened you. Do you always come to bed so early? I did not see you at dinner."

"No, I had a quiet tray down here. It's the best thing for a headache. You won't mind my not talking to-night, will you? Good night," and with a wicked grimace in the direction of the discomfited woman Molly settled herself cosily among her pillows and was soon in the land of dreams.



"MRS. HAMLYN LEANED PONDEROUSLY OVER THE SIDE, TRYING TO SEE THE SPEAKER."

At seven the next morning the stewardess brought Miss March her early cup of tea. Now, Molly had been awake for some time, and, on reviewing the events of the night before, had come to the conclusion that as the cabin was so small and Mrs. Hamlyn was so large, it would be wiser to live in peace than in strife for the remainder of the voyage, so she resolved with magnanimity to bury the hatchet and make the best of a bad bargain for the next fortnight. But Molly was young, and quite forgot to take into account the amazing force of two opposing temperaments.

The lady awoke at the opening of the door and turned to see what was happening, and the sight of the steaming cup of tea instantly aroused the strong selfishness which is so noticeable a trait in all old travellers of her type.

"An early cup of tea; now that's very thoughtful of you, stewardess."

"It's for Miss March, madam. She has one every morning," came dryly from the woman.

"Ah, of course"—with oily blandness. "Young people know how to take care of themselves."

Molly giggled at the stewardess at the remembrance of last night's checkmate.

"But it looks very hot," continued Mrs. Hamlyn, "and Miss March mayn't care for such hot tea. Very few people do. You might get her another cup while I am drinking that, stewardess."

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"Pecksniff!"

"*What* did you say?" came with ominous frigidity from above.

"I said Pecksniff," said Molly, sweetly. "The stewardess's name is Mrs. Pecksniff. I thought you'd like to know."

The stewardess, her face scarlet with suppressed laughter, stooped to give Miss March her cup. She knew her Dickens. "Lor', miss, how can you?" she whispered.

"I'll take this cup," continued their tormentor, "and Mrs. Pecksniff shall get you another."

The stewardess retreated in haste, cannoning into a cabin steward carrying a can of hot water.

"Hold hard, there!" cried the man. "Why, you might have scalded my foot. Whatever is the matter?"

"That Miss March'll be the death o' me. Do you remember the day she locked all the bathrooms on the outside, and we waited like fools for 'em to come out, and there wasn't anyone in? She's always up to her tricks, but I guess we're going to have some fun in that cabin before we've done." She hurried off for the tea.

Inside the cabin conversation was progressing under difficulties. Mrs. Hamlyn's bland pomposity drove the girl nearly wild with rebellious aggravation, while the elder woman, all finer instincts of tact or sense of mental atmosphere dulled by fatty degeneration, rambled heavily on:—

"A curious name for a stewardess," she was tolling forth, "and rather typical of the race. I knew a doctor once who was exceedingly fond of operations, and he was called Cutdeep, and there was a Dr. Coffin in Simla. There are two theories to account for these surnames. Either the names influence the choice of the profession, or the persons are foundlings, and the names are chosen in after life to suit their calling."

"Where are my big-headed pins?" came imperiously from Molly, who had just noticed their absence.

"Ah, h'm, pins—I believe I did take one or two last night for my skirt. When you have gained my experience in travelling, Miss March, you will learn that anything exposed to open view in a tent or cabin shared by two or more persons is common property and liable to be used by one or sundry, as the saying is. But, if you attach any importance to the pins I will willingly——"

"Oh, no, not at all!" cried Molly, interrupting with the cheerful air her long-suffering brothers at home had learnt to call the "danger flag." "I am glad to learn. I always envy the cool assurance and *savoir faire* of old travellers."

"It will come in time," returned Mrs. Hamlyn, placidly. She was a kind-hearted woman when it cost her nothing, and her fat made her easy-going.

The stewardess here made her entrance with the second cup of tea.

"Shall I prepare your bath, miss?" she asked the girl.

Molly craned her neck to look at her companion. "Would you like to get up first?" she asked.

"Oh, no!" said Mrs. Hamlyn, hastily. "I would much rather you went first, and then I can get down in your absence."

Molly remembered her vision of the night before, and choked. She nodded to the waiting stewardess, and the moment the woman had left the cabin she hopped out of bed, bundled into her dressing-gown, and gathered up her towels and sponges.

"What jolly soap you've got!" she cried, picking up an immaculate pink tablet of Atkinson's most expensive. "Smells ever so much nicer than mine. Common property, of course, as it's on view. Thanks awfully," and before Mrs. Hamlyn's open mouth could pour forth speech she was cake-walking down the corridor in tumultuous mirth.

"What a terrible girl!" groaned poor Mrs. Hamlyn. "I see I shall have to be very careful. Quite the modern product." She sighed.

On returning from her bath twenty minutes later Molly met a mountain of blue flannel waddling down the corridor.

"May I have my soap?" asked the mountain, meekly.

"Oh, of course. A thousand thanks," and the extra-scented *savon*, much reduced in size, returned to its legitimate owner.

When Mrs. Hamlyn came back to the cabin Molly was already on deck, her yellow hair waving rebelliously in the glorious breeze, fit symbol of the mutinous thoughts running riot in her brain. During the following week the silent battle continued without intermission between the two ill-assorted companions whom an unkind fate had thrown together. Mrs. Hamlyn had unfortunately come to the conclusion, after the soap episode, that at any cost she must maintain a firm upper hand with her young companion, and that she must, in her own parlance, put her foot down. It was a very large foot, and the putting down was a crushing performance,

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or would have proved so had Molly been of a crushable nature; but she was absolutely irrepressible, and directly she caught the drift of the other's tactics she plunged into the struggle with the irresponsible glee of a mischievous child, and enjoyed herself thoroughly. The elder woman hadn't a chance against her. Mrs. Hamlyn found that all her toilet appurtenances had a mysterious knack of disappearing, and the poor lady spent all her mornings trying to dress. It generally ended in the stewardess being summoned to assist in the search for the missing object, which would be found behind a trunk or under the lower berth.

"I expect it fell when the boat rolled," Molly would say, with innocent eyes, if any remark were made.

Mrs. Hamlyn, in sheer self-defence, locked up all her small paraphernalia, and life became a burden in unlocking trunks to find a hatpin. Molly on her side had, the first morning, packed up the pretty brush-bag and the inviting pincushion; and now that her companion had done the same the cabin, when cleaned up for the day by the steward, the trunks out of sight under the lower berth, and the beds made, had the appearance of an untenanted apartment.

"I don't exactly see," said Miss March one day, when they were both changing their frocks for dinner and Mrs. Hamlyn was bemoaning the lack of pins, "how one and sundry are to make common property of everything visible in a cabin or tent, if there *is* nothing visible. Do you?"

"It is most annoying," was the tart rejoinder, "that there is not a pin in the place."

"Why don't you put out your pincushion?" said Molly, fastening her brooch before the glass. "It's such a pretty one."

"The last time I did you took all the pins," returned Mrs. Hamlyn, sourly.

"Ah, they were only plain ones. Not nice large-headed ones at a shilling a card; and I never brushed my hair with your brush. The one and sundry *must* have a limit, you know."

The brushing episode rankled badly with Molly, and was, indeed, unpardonable; it had occurred three days ago, when, on returning from her bath to finish dressing, she had found Mrs. Hamlyn hastily giving the last touch to her toilet for the bathroom *levée*, where a weird procession of ladies, in varied *déshabillé*, patiently awaited their turn for the vacant bathrooms.

Mrs. Hamlyn had the grace to blush at the mention of what she had called at the time her "shocking absent-mindedness." She had no ally in the stewardess, for her bland pomposity and knack of giving unnecessary trouble with the air of conferring a favour had turned that long-suffering woman into a morose tyrant, and the situation had not improved since Mrs. Hamlyn, forgetting her peacemaking tactics of an old traveller, had been goaded by Molly's mischievous face one morning into saying, "You know, Mrs. Pecksniff, this is not the way to make your ladies remember your services at the end of their journey."

So the three-cornered battle went on, and the good ship ploughed her way round Gib into a stormy Bay of Biscay. So stormy was it that Mrs. Hamlyn and Miss March found themselves both taking refuge in bed late one afternoon. For the first time they had to spend several hours together without the excuse of sleep or dressing to keep them silent, and on Mrs. Hamlyn beginning a ponderous conversation the girl, too depressed by climatic conditions to stand on her dignity, maintained her share of it in a listlessly civil manner. The stewardess brought them tea, and they talked and dozed till the dinner-bell rang. The sea was running so high that dining became a difficulty, and the trays arrived flooded with soup and gravy. That business over, they settled down to more wearisome conversation in the brilliantly lighted little cabin until sleep should fall upon them.

"This reminds me of a terrible experience I had when I was first married, off the Cape of Good Hope, in a sailing vessel," said Mrs. Hamlyn.

Molly sighed. This made the fifth "terrible experience" since tea. However, there was nothing else to do, the dancing print made it impossible to read, so she succumbed to her fate, dropping an occasional "ah" and "oh" and "really" as necessity required. Gazing upwards, she fell to counting the squares in the iron chain-work supporting her companion's mattress.

Mrs. Hamlyn, maundering on, suddenly heard a startled exclamation.

"What is it?" she asked. "What are you doing?" for she felt herself poked and prodded from beneath.

"What an extraordinary thing!" cried Molly, sitting up in her excitement. "They can't have turned your mattress for ages! There's a most exquisitely carved ebony stick jammed between your bed and the chain

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mattress. Fancy the stewardess never finding it!"

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Hamlyn, "I knew she never made the bed properly. These creatures never do. All they think of is their fees."

"It's a most beautiful walking-stick," continued the girl, full of the treasure-trove, "all carved with animals. Some poor man had this cabin last, I suppose."

would never have known it was there if I hadn't been idiot enough to call out. I found it, and I take it. It will make a lovely present for my brother Tom."

"Edgar has always longed for an ebony stick."

"So has Tom, and he shall have it."

The absurd quarrel went on until both disputants were thoroughly heated, and Molly turned to the wall in high dudgeon, refusing



"MRS. HAMLYN SCOWLED."

"Men are such careless creatures," said her companion, complacently. "It is fortunate you saw it. It will do excellently for my nephew Edgar."

"But it is not yours," cried Miss March, indignantly. "I found it, if it comes to that, and I shall certainly stick to it."

"It's in my bed, you see, so of course it's mine," returned Mrs. Hamlyn, with aggravating calm.

"Not at all," cried Molly, hotly. "You

to speak any more. She fell asleep while racking her brains how to circumvent her annoying companion.

The next day, coming down to the cabin in the afternoon, Molly went straight to the upper berth, determined to confiscate the bone of contention. But the stick was gone.

"Mean old cat!" cried Miss March, in wrath. "I *will* find it. Ah!" Her eye had fallen on Mrs. Hamlyn's roll of umbrellas and

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parasols strapped together in the corner. There was the ebony stick in the middle, and a large piece of coarse string had been employed to tie it firmly in its place.

Molly March deliberately cut the string and tied it into *her* roll of umbrellas and parasols in the opposite corner.

"Now," she said, with a determined nod, "we will see who will win!" She left the roll where it stood, scorning further precaution.

That night, when she came down to bed, the ebony stick was once more firmly tied into Mrs. Hamlyn's umbrellas.

By lunch next day it was Miss March's property.

Once more at night Mrs. Hamlyn could call it her own. Neither spoke a word on the subject.

The struggle was ludicrous, but intense.

Regularly day and night the ebony stick changed hands. For an hour one day Miss March tried in vain to pack it in her trunk, cross-wise, length-wise, any-wise, but the stick was a little too long, and she had to give it up in despair. There was no other mode of concealing it. The next day she went off into an involuntary peal of laughter on entering the cabin and finding Mrs. Hamlyn on her knees, purple and suffocating, carrying out the same manœuvres with *her* cabin trunk.

Mrs. Hamlyn scowled. Miss March fled in hysterics, and fell into the arms of the stewardess coming round the corner, to whom she confided her woes.

The next day they would arrive at Plymouth, where both were to disembark. Miss March had made up her mind.

"I shall wait," she said to herself, with stern determination, "till we actually get there, and then I shall run down to the cabin at the last moment, take it out of her umbrellas, even under her eyes if need be, and walk off with it in my hand."

Curiously enough, Mrs. Hamlyn had determined on the same stratagem.

"I am quite determined poor Edgar shall have his present," she said to herself, "and as that disagreeable girl is sure to stick to it to the last, I shall wait till the last moment, and then walk off with it in my hand."

Early the next morning, about three hours before their arrival, the two found themselves in the cabin making final preparations. The ebony stick shone blackly among Mrs. Hamlyn's umbrellas. That lady was counting money in her purse.

"I shall settle the fees now," she announced. "That leaves one free at the last moment in case of a rush."

Molly pricked up her little ears. "Free?" Could it be possible——?

"So shall I," she said, "and then there will be nothing to think about but getting off."

Mrs. Hamlyn looked at her with suspicion as she pressed the button for the stewardess. Miss March, with nice feeling, took a little promenade in the corridor while the feeing went on, and then, as Mrs. Hamlyn mounted on deck, she in her turn sought the servitors to give them largesse.

Plymouth at last, the boat just gliding into the dock. With heavy haste Mrs. Hamlyn proceeded to the cabin. Molly March, who had been absorbed in the arrival, saw her large black hat vanish round the corner of the staircase and, with a sudden throb of recollection, bounded after her. They reached the cabin together, the elder woman entering first. Molly pressed in after her, determined for anything. Mrs. Hamlyn snatched her bundle of umbrellas.

"Ah!" she cried, with an accusing gesture to Molly, who, after a glance, had seized her own.

They looked from one to the other in consternation.

The stick was in neither!

The stewardess appeared at the door. "All passengers for shore to leave at once, ladies. Your baggage will follow."

"But the ebony stick?" cried both together.

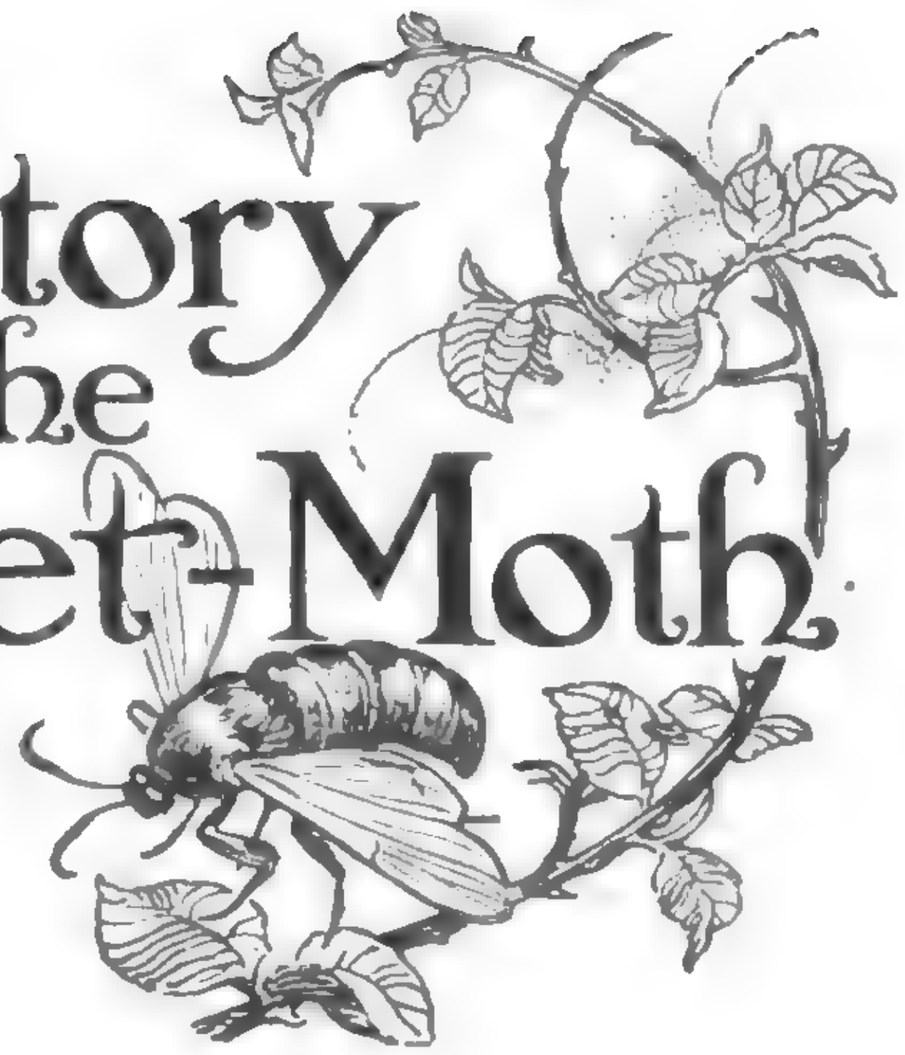
"All property found in the cabins is steward's perks," said the woman, grimly, and drove them silent before her.

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The Life Story of the Lunar Hornet-Moth



By JOHN J. WARD, F.E.S.

Author of "Some Nature Biographies," "Peeps Into Nature's Ways," "Life Histories of Familiar Plants," etc.

Illustrated with Original Photographs by the Author.

THE woodman had been busy for several weeks past in the copse-wood, and the young trees and saplings which the previous autumn had occupied all the available space between the older trees were now so much short-cut underwood, the new wood of their cut ends standing out conspicuously above the sheets of nodding blue-bells and fresh green of the spring herbage.

Here and there the cut boles of some of the older tree tenants of the wood showed that the gleaming axes had carried out the bailiff's decree. Now, however, the great tree-trunks and brushwood had been carried away, and Nature was tidying-up things and rapidly repairing the damage done; and, in spite of the havoc wrought, everything looked bright and hopeful in the morning sunlight.

Sitting on a tree-base listening to the music of the birds, and endeavouring to picture in the mind's eye how the damaged branches will shortly be clothed and hidden from view by the fresh green leaves of the now conspicuous new shoots, the eye is suddenly attracted by a neatly-cut round hole in the lopped stump of a branch of the sallow or goat-willow tree. The hole is just about large enough to receive the end of a blacklead pencil or the tip of one's little finger, and apparently it has been cut by means of an auger (Fig. 1). One naturally wonders what purpose the woodman had in boring that hole, especially as other willow stumps similarly bored may be found here and there throughout the coppice.

It was indeed a strange "woodman" that drilled those holes, but how they were formed need not trouble us for the moment, for just at present there is a more important matter for consideration.



Fig. 1.—The hole in the stump.

The sun's rays are falling directly into the hole under observation, partly illuminating its interior, and while we are wondering what function the hole could serve, we suddenly become aware of the fact that there is something moving inside it. What can it be? Some inquisitive insect, maybe, that has entered and is now returning. Whatever it is, it is moving but slowly!

Presently the forepart of a shiny brown body appears, gradually advancing

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Fig. 2.—What came out of the hole.

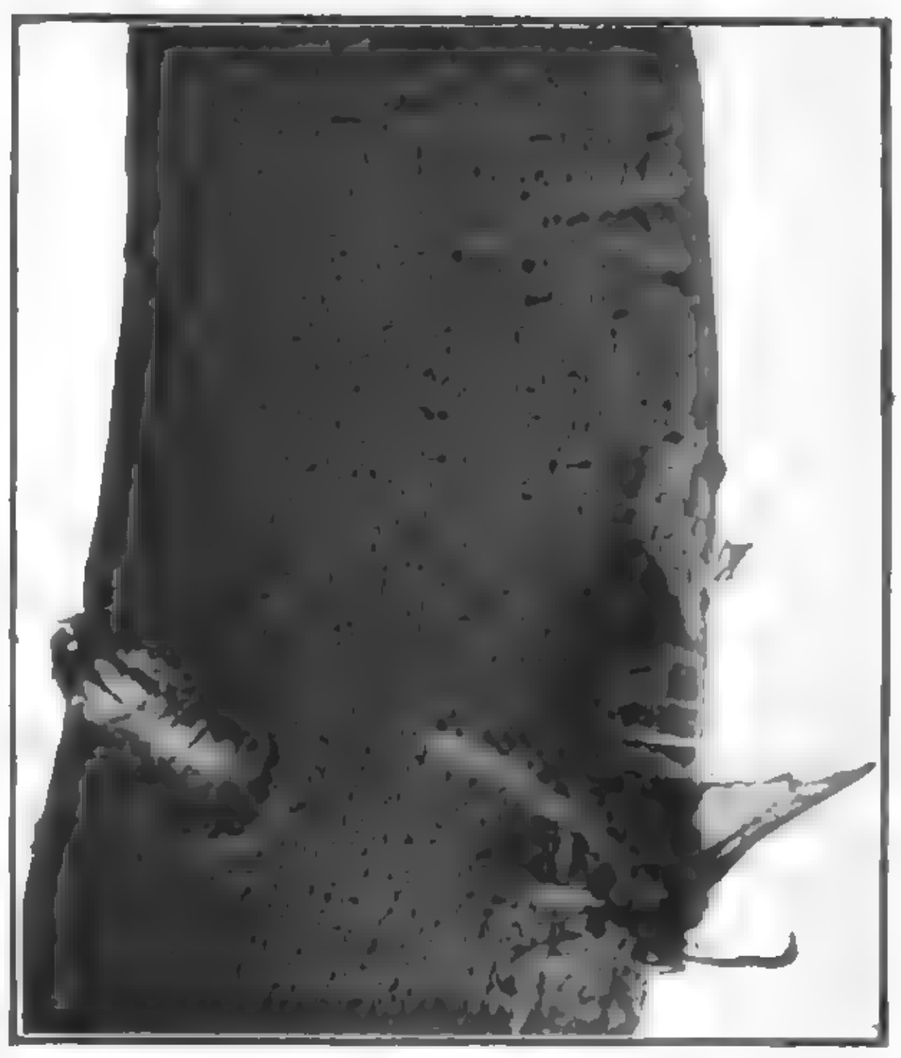


Fig. 3.—A transformation scene. The brown skin burst open, and a curious wasp-like insect quickly crawled on to the bark and developed its wings.

by little bunts as if pushed from behind, until at last it is distinctly protruding from the hole (Fig. 2). Still it continues to advance, and just when we expect to see the curious object fall to the ground a most extraordinary transformation scene takes place.

The brown skin suddenly breaks open, and from it a wasp-like insect with a black-and-yellow-banded body crawls on to the bark (Fig. 3). Its wings at first look soiled and crumpled, but in a few minutes they unfold from their creases, and the insect at once commences to travel up the branch, continuing until it reaches the cut end left by the woodman (Fig. 4). There the hornet-like creature suns itself for an hour or more, looking decidedly dangerous even as it rests. When the sun is at its brightest the insect's feelers suddenly commence to quiver excitedly, and then, with a bee-like buzz, it takes to its wings, rising in the air and before departing flying about twice around our heads with all the characteristic movements of a dangerous stinging insect, causing us instinctively to duck, even though we may know the insect to be perfectly harmless.



Fig. 4.—The black-and-yellow-banded insect, when matured, looked decidedly dangerous as it rested in the sunlight.

Such an incident anyone may be fortunate enough to witness should he wander amongst willow and poplar trees (but perhaps more often in the case of the former) during June and July, and, very naturally, a surprised eye-witness will desire to understand a little more of what has really taken place, and it is a curious story indeed.

The wasp-like insect is a quite harmless creature, and is known to the entomologist as the lunar hornet-moth, so named from its remarkable superficial resemblance to the dangerous stinging hornet. It does not really resemble a hornet, for if the two insects are examined together their difference is quite obvious; but the arrangement of black, yellow, and brown colouring, combined with the wasp-like form (for a hornet is only a large species of wasp), together with its similar habits of movement and flight, and the still more extraordinary transparent wings, give a distinct hornet impression (Fig. 5); and when that dangerous insect is under observation one does not stop to quibble over details.

This remarkable moth has, in the course of its evolution, become deceptively coloured to represent an imitation hornet or wasp, and the object of such mimicry is, of course,

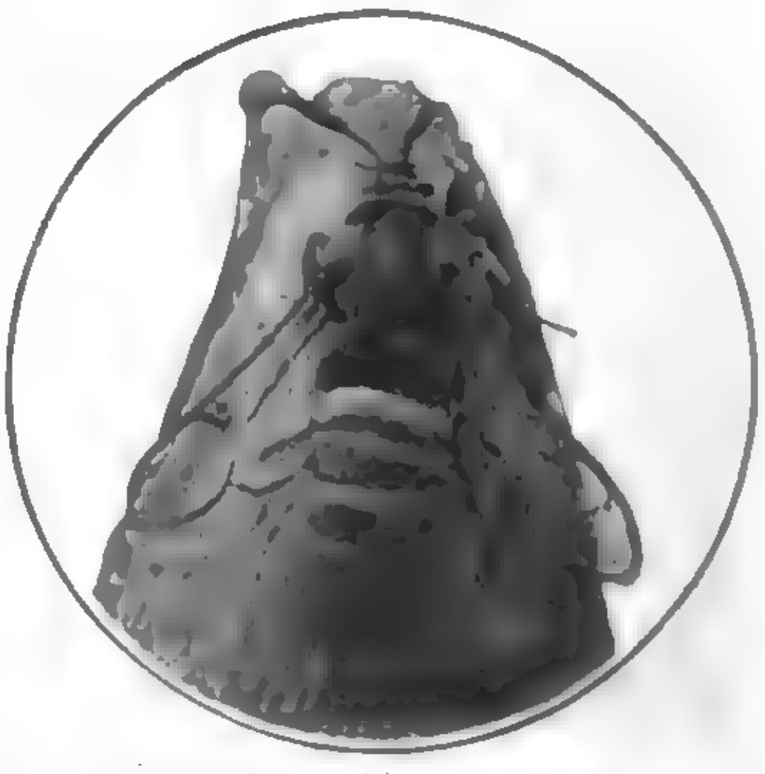


Fig. 5.—The hornet-like creature was, nevertheless, a harmless moth, with transparent wings and a wasp-like body.

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obvious enough, for the poisonous stings so characteristic of the wasp family render them immune from the attacks of many would-be foes.

The extent to which this mimicry has been carried is striking in many respects, for not only have the movements of these stinging insects been faithfully followed, but the moth is also able to make a buzzing sound when it approaches very like that of a wasp or bee —a most unusual characteristic for a moth. Even their external anatomy is likewise largely reproduced. The antennæ, or feelers, are considerably more like those of a wasp than a moth (Fig. 4), while again the colours of the moth heighten the imposture; but the most extraordinary feature of all is the acquirement of transparent wings.

A moth in the ordinary way has its otherwise transparent wings clothed on both sides with innumerable minute opaque scales, all placed like the tiles on the roof of a house, and according to the manner in which these scales are arranged in groups and lines of various colours, so the markings and colouring of the wings are varied. Consequently, when handling the wings of a moth, we find our fingers covered with "dust," but which really consists of these microscopic scales rubbed from the insect's wings, and the more "dust" removed by the fingers the more transparent become the wings. The wings of the hornet-moth, however, in acquiring a similarity to those of its protected model, have almost entirely lost their scales, only their margins now being so clothed, which gives them a dark edging, quite different from those of a wasp or hornet. In this connection it is an interesting fact that when the moth is enclosed in its chrysalis skin its wings are then clothed with scales, which disappear as it completes its development—a feature which shows that its transparent wings were derived from those of the ordinary type common to moths.

There are some fourteen species of these clear-wing moths found in the British Isles, but the whole family of them, excepting the species under consideration and one other nearly-related insect, are much smaller than a wasp; they nevertheless all bear the characteristics of stinging insects, and probably derive protective advantages from their resemblance.

Now, in the ordinary way a moth is of nocturnal habits, flying at dusk or in the darkness of the night; but our hornet-like moth flies during the day in the sunlight. It is obvious that a mimetic resemblance to a wasp would serve no purpose to an insect of nocturnal habits, for the wasp spends the night in its nest. We see, therefore, that not only has the colour, external anatomy, and bodily movements of the moth become marvellously adapted to correspond with those of a wasp-like insect, but so relentlessly has it pursued the path of its model that it has even changed from a night-flying to a day-flying insect.



Fig. 6.—The eggs as placed on the bark by the parent moth.

We should remember, too, that all these extraordinary changes have been effected quite unconsciously so far as the moth itself is concerned; it probably knows nothing of its remarkable similitude to a wasp. Such features are the outcome of variations, or "sports," which from time to time have approached wasp-like characteristics, and these individuals (being better protected than their fellows) have survived and conveyed to their offspring their peculiarities, the variations of the later generations again and again advancing in the same direction until we have the wonderful results here described.

We might very naturally suppose that a moth possessing such extraordinary protective characteristics would have become very successful in the struggle for existence, but this hornet-moth is by no means abundant. Indeed, it probably represents an insect which has been much persecuted for very long periods of time by its natural foes, and only by means of these striking developments has it been saved from extermination. It is highly probable that in its perfect state (*i.e.*, in its moth stage) it is to-day particularly well protected, but there are stages in its history, before its wasp-like resemblance commences, when it has very dangerous foes to encounter; which brings us to that period before it

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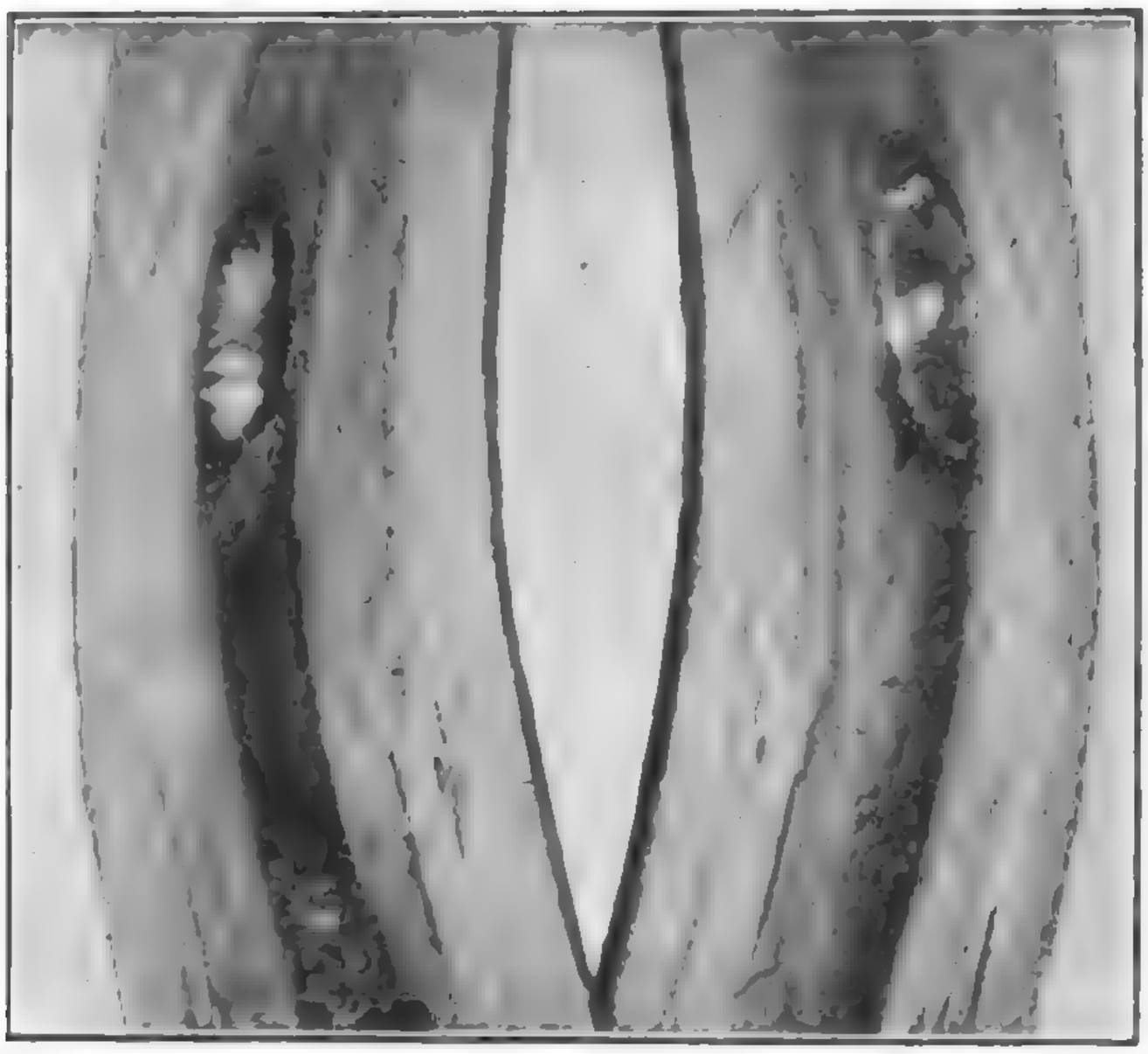


Fig. 7.—An internal view of the stump. Here the stump is seen split lengthwise and opened out. The moth caterpillar is seen on the left in the passage it has bored in the wood. Below it some wood-scrapings are seen, which close the hole leading to the outside. Immediately behind it is also another barrier of the same material.

emerged from the round hole in the willow stump.

When we examine the neatly-drilled hole from which the moth appeared, it seems incredible that the insect itself could have cut that hole in the solid wood; nevertheless, such was the fact. When the female moth takes to her wings and flies in the sunlight, she soon finds a mate, and afterwards her business in life is to seek for stumps of the goat-willow similar in size to that from which she herself emerged. Having selected a suitable branch, she deposits some of her eggs upon it (Fig. 6). The eggs are brown in colour, and are therefore not at all conspicuous when resting on the bark; occasionally, too, they are placed on the leaves of shoots near the ground.

In due course the little caterpillar emerges from the egg and crawls to suitable parts of the bark, and there commences to burrow into the wood, continuing until it reaches the central area of the branch, where it eats out a tunnel extending upwards for several inches, widening it as it grows.

Eventually it develops into a fairly large white maggot-like grub, which not infrequently spends two years feeding within the branch; but it never forgets to pay due attention to the diameter of the entrance hole, for this has to be kept sufficiently large to allow of its emergence when it has completed its development. Also, it always takes careful precaution to lock and bolt the door against intruders to its dwelling; for there are many dangerous foes outside that make it their business to enter any open holes that they may find. Sometimes these visitors are themselves in search of a meal, or it may be that they have young to feed; while still other uninvited guests make a practice of depositing their eggs in such situations, and then, when their offspring hatch out, they find a well-fed grub on which to prey.

To properly understand how the hornet-moth larva guards its citadel against attacks of such kinds we require to carefully split down the branch in which it lives, and so get an internal view of the stump, as shown in Fig. 7.

The external hole is at the bottom of the left-hand division, and it is seen to be barricaded on the inside by means of wood scrapings, which are held together by strong silken threads spun by the caterpillar and woven in amongst them. Should an enemy by persistent efforts effect an entrance through this obstruction, the caterpillar is still protected by a further barricade of the same materials,

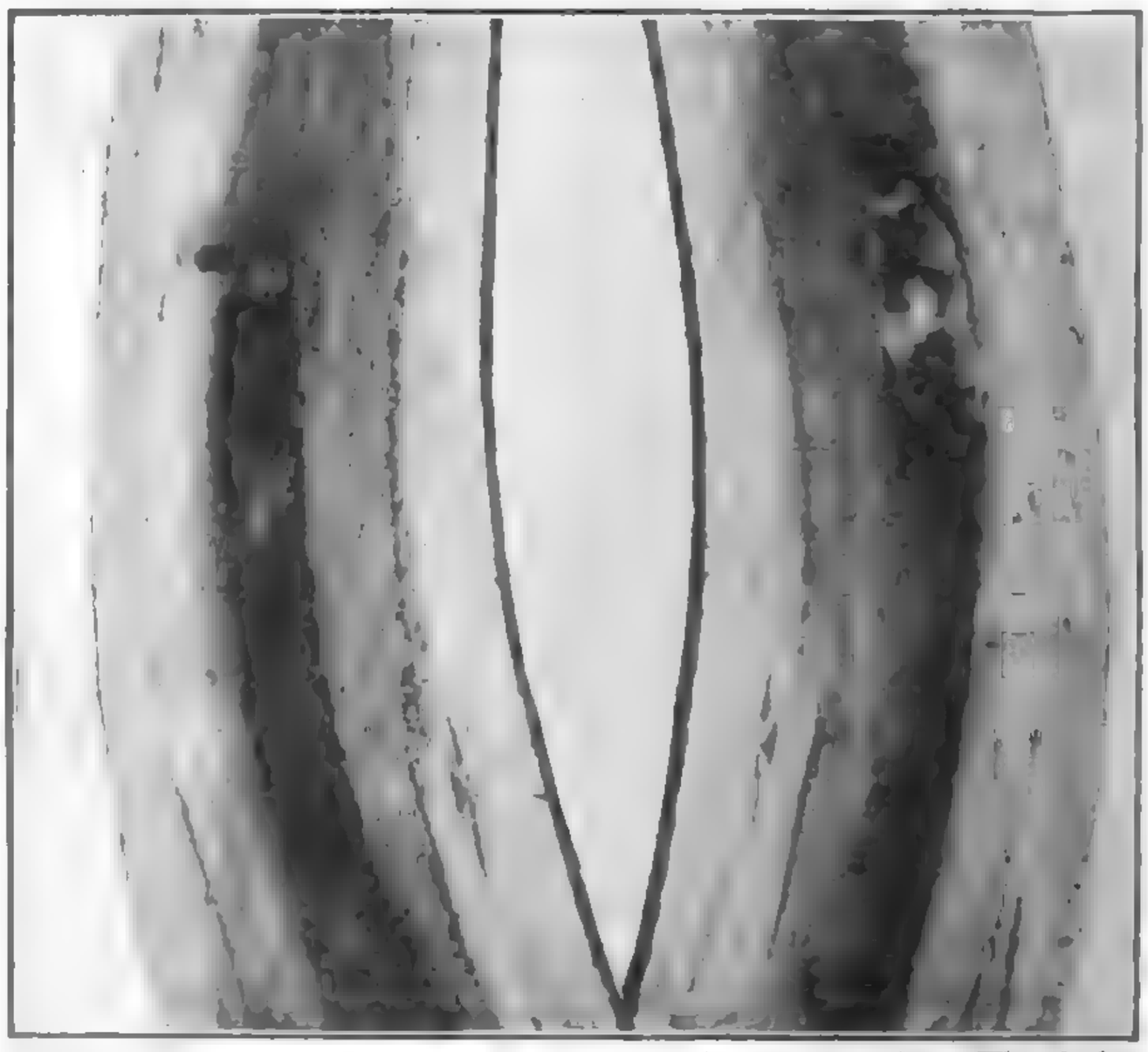


Fig 8.—The caterpillar has now changed to a brown chrysalis. This legless chrysalis has to break through the barrier of wood-scrapings near to it and work its way down the boring to the hole, and force its way through into the sunlight, as shown in Fig. 2.

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which at least does not encourage it. Thus protected, the larva tunnels its way along the heart of the branch with its head directed upwards. Then comes the time when it is full-fed, when a most curious instinct comes into play. The larva which has hitherto worked up the branch head-forwards reverses its position and directs its head towards the place of egress. It then moults its skin and becomes a brown chrysalis as shown in Fig. 8. The object of its change of position then immediately becomes obvious, for while the flexible body of the caterpillar could readily reverse its position in the tunnel, yet with the stubborn body of the chrysalis this would have been quite impossible.

The chrysalis lies by for some three or four weeks, during which time the moth matures, until some morning when the sun has well warmed the external area of the branch, the moth enclosed in the chrysalis skin is encouraged into active life.

Should the moth emerge into the cavity bored by the larva, its wings and soft body would get sadly damaged; but such does not happen. The chrysalis steadily bores its way through the first barrier, and then works its way down until the closing defence at the entrance is reached, which it likewise penetrates, and so emerges through the open hole as shown in Figs. 2 and 3.

Since the chrysalis is not provided with legs or other limbs, it is somewhat astonishing how it can travel for several inches through the boring. The movement, however, is explained if we examine the empty chrysalis skin which it leaves behind (Fig. 9), for each segment is provided with a row of strong spines, which act as "climbing irons."



Fig. 9.—An enlarged view of the empty chrysalis skin, showing that each segment is edged with spines, which serve as "climbing irons" to the pupa.

Such, then, are a few of the marvellous details revealed by consideration of a simple round hole in a willow stump.

Even around the hole we have studied another curious insect life story commences, for each of the raised dots seen on the bark in Figs. 1, 2, and 3 was once a living insect, but one which lost its limbs and became sedentary as it sucked away at the juices of the tree. Meanwhile, as it increased in size, scales of wax oozed from its body and encased it, finally fixing it to the spot, and under which it perished—first, however, leaving its batch of eggs, from which its six-legged offspring will eventually appear and crawl from under the scales of their dead parent's body.



Fig. 10. — The enemy which searches the holes with its long ovipositor, and which organ the wood-scrapings serve to intercept.

Or let us suppose that we were able to spare time to watch the various enemies that approached the entrance hole to the caterpillar's boring during the two years or thereabouts in which it was feeding, what strange stories we could relate! I can only refer to one here — that illustrated in Fig. 10.

There we have another wasp-like insect, with what looks like an enormous sting, with which it probes the hole, persevering until it has completely penetrated the caterpillar's barricades, and then departing. The caterpillar would remain quite unharmed, but not for long, for that long "sting" was really an ovipositor or tube for placing eggs into the boring, from which hungry grubs would hatch and prey upon the caterpillar. Surely we cannot wonder at its double barricades.

The attacking insect is known as an ichneumon fly, and is a species but seldom seen in the British Isles, although I found and photographed the insect here illustrated in this country. On the Continent, however, it is a more familiar insect, and there the hornet-moth consequently has a greater need for its wood and silk defences. In this country the caterpillar still constructs its strong barriers against less formidable foes and the possible danger of a casual visitor such as I have here illustrated.

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BITS OF LIFE.

By O. HENRY.

Illustrated by A. K. MacDonald.

III.



The Last Leaf



IN a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called "places." These "places" make strange angles and curves. One street crosses itself a time or two. A certain artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this picturesque street.

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing-dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a "colony."



"THE ART PEOPLE SOON CAME PROWLING."

At the top of a squatty, three-storey brick house Sue and Johnsy had their studio. "Johnsy" was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine, the other from California. They had met at the *table d'hôte* of an Eighth Street "Delmonico's," and found their tastes in Art, chicory, salad, and bishop-sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy finger. Over on the East Side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims

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"A CHAFING-DISH OR TWO FROM SIXTH AVENUE."

by scores; but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown "places."

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman, with blood thinned by California zephyrs, was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hall with a shaggy grey eyebrow.

"She has one chance in—let us say—ten," he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. "And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of taking the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopœia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?"

"She—she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day," said Sue.

"Paint? Bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking about twice—a man, for instance?"

"A man?" said Sue, with a jews'-harp twang in her voice. "Is a man worth—but, no, doctor—there is nothing of the kind."

"Well, it is the weakness, then," said the doctor. "I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract fifty per cent. from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak-sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of one in ten."

After the doctor had gone Sue went into the workshop and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy's room with her drawing-board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bed-clothes, with her face towards the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.



"'SHE HAS ONE CHANCE IN—LET US SAY—TEN,' HE SAID."

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horse-show riding-trousers and a monocle on the figure of the hero—an Idaho cowboy—she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out of the window and counting—backwards.

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"CRIED A JAPANESE NAPKIN TO A PULP."

"Twelve," she said, and a little later "eleven"; and then "ten" and "nine"; and then "eight" and "seven" almost together.

Sue looked solicitously out of the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half-way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

"What is it, dear?" asked Sue.

"Six," said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. "They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now."

"Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie."

"Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go, too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?"

"Oh, I never heard of such nonsense," complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. "What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl! Don't be a goosey. Why, the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were—let's see exactly what he said—he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so that she can sell it and buy port wine for her sick child and pork-chops for her greedy self."

"You needn't get any more wine," said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window. "There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go, too."

"Johnsy, dear," said Sue, bending over her, "will you promise me to keep your eyes closed and not look out of the window until I have done working? I must hand those drawings in by to-morrow. I need the light, or I would draw the blind down."

"Couldn't you draw in the other room?" asked Johnsy, coldly.

"I'd rather be here by you," said Sue.



"SHE ARRANGED HER BOARD AND BEGAN A PEN-AND-INK DRAWING."

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"Besides, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves."

"Tell me as soon as you have finished," said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue, "because I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn loose my hold on everything and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves."

"Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit-miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move till I come back."



"FIVE WHAT, DEAR? TELL YOUR SUDIE."

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michel Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in Art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in anyone, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly-lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and



"OLD BEHRMAN SHOUTED HIS CONTEMPT AND DERISION FOR SUCH IDIOTIC IMAGININGS."

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how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

"Is dere people in de world," he cried, "mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I vill not bose as a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der prain of her? Ach, dot poor leetle Miss Yohnsy!"

"She is very ill and weak," said Sue, "and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old — old flibbertigibbet."

"You are just like a woman!" yelled Behrman. "Who said I vill not bose? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I haf been trying to say dot I am ready to bose. Gott! dis is not any blace in which one so good as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I vill baint a masterpiece and ve shall all go avay. Gott! Yes."



"BEHRMAN TOOK HIS SEAT AS THE HERMIT-MINER ON AN UPTURNED KETTLE FOR A ROCK."

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the blind down to the window-sill and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out of the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit-miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes, staring at the drawn green blind.

"Pull it up; I want to see," she ordered, in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, but with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from a branch some twenty feet above the ground.

"It is the last one," said Johnsy. "I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall to-day, and I shall die at the same time."

"Dear, dear!" said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow. "Think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What shall I do?"

But Johnsy did not answer. The lonesomest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night, the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the blind be raised.

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The ivy leaf was still there.

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken-broth over the gas stove.

"I've been a bad girl, Sudie," said Johnsy. "Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and—no; bring me a hand-mirror first, and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook."

An hour later she said:—

"Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue made an excuse to go into the hall as he left.

"Even chances," said the doctor, taking Sue's thin, shaking hand in his. "With good nursing you'll win. And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is—some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital to-day to be made more comfortable."



"SUE WAS STIRRING HER CHICKEN-BROTH OVER THE GAS STOVE."

The next day the doctor said to Sue: "She's out of danger. You've won. Nutrition and care now—that's all."

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woollen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

"I have something to tell you, white mouse," she said. "Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia to-day in the hospital. He was only ill two days. The caretaker found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes and a palette with green and yellow colours mixed on it, and — look out of the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece—he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell."



"BRING ME A HAND-MIRROR."

(One of the two sketches announced in our last number has been unavoidably held over, and will appear next month.)

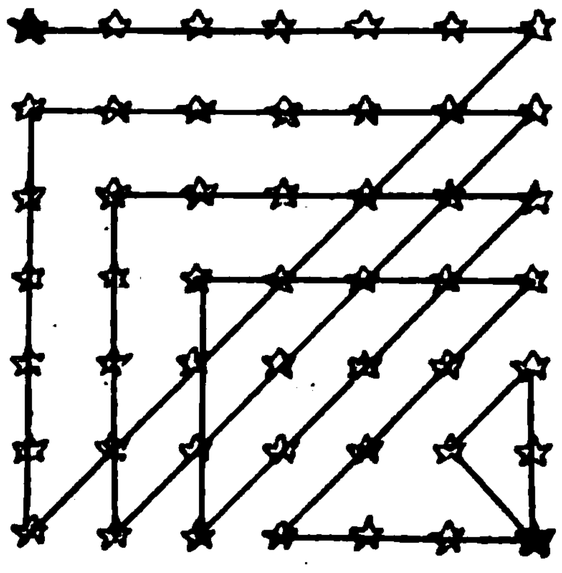
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PERPLEXITIES.

With Some Easy Puzzles for Beginners. By Henry E. Dudeney.

140.—THE FORTY-NINE STARS.

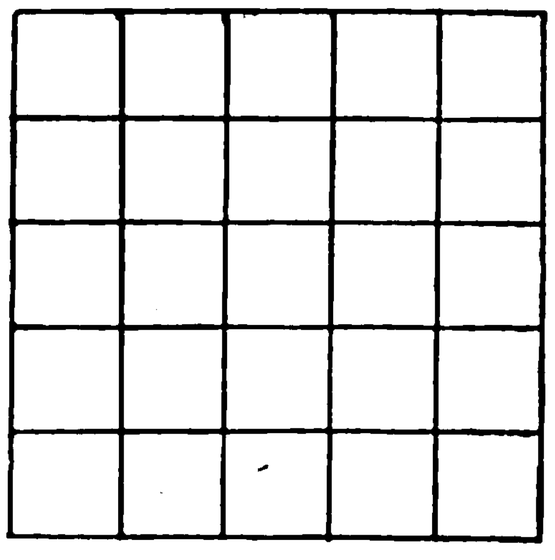


THE puzzle in this case is simply to take your pencil and, starting from one black star, strike out all the stars in twelve straight strokes, ending at the other black star. It will be seen that the attempt shown in the illustration requires fifteen strokes. Can you do it in twelve? Every turning must be made on a star, and the lines must be parallel to the sides and diagonals of the square, as shown.

141.—NEW MEASURING PUZZLE.

HERE is a new poser in measuring liquids that will be found interesting. A man has two ten-quart vessels full of wine, and a five-quart and a four-quart measure. He wants to put exactly three quarts into each of the two measures. How is he to do it? And how many manipulations (pourings from one vessel to another) do you require? Of course, waste of wine, tilting, and other tricks are not allowed.

142.—THE NEST OF RECTANGLES.



How many rectangles are contained within this square? It will be seen that squares of various sizes may be picked out, and rectangles 1 by 2, 2 by 3, 1 by 4, 3 by 5, and so on. How many are there altogether? There is a very simple rule that will give you the answer for a square of any number of cells. Can you find it?

143.—CURIOUS NUMBERS.

THE number 48 has this peculiarity, that if you add 1 to it the result is a square number (49, the square of 7), and if you add 1 to its half, you also get a square number (25, the square of 5). Now, there is no limit to the numbers that have this peculiarity, and it is an interesting puzzle to find three more of them—the smallest possible numbers. What are they?

144.—A WORD SQUARE.

SHE, like some nymph or *fifth* upon the shore,
Notes, as she *sixths*, her footprints in the sand.
He sings the song to *fourth*, and asks her hand.
"*First* not," he says, "your promise, I implore."

Her hand she places in the *third* of his.
And all the world seems full of joy and bliss.
The rough path of his life is *second* made.
To tell the tale this word-square is essayed.

145.—THE MINERS' HOLIDAY.

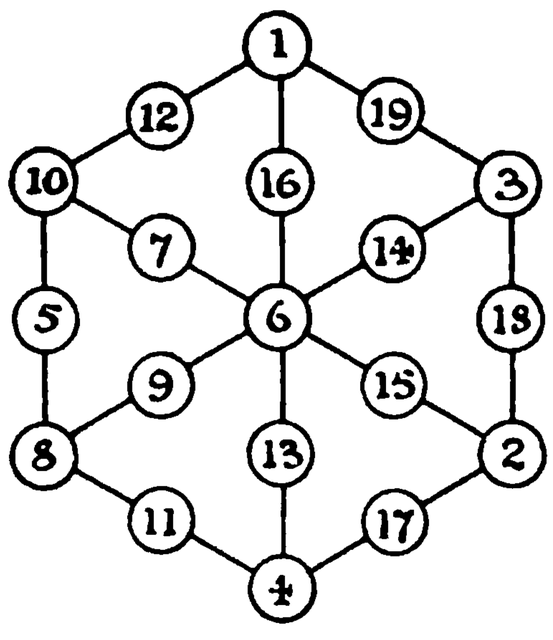
SEVEN coal-miners took a holiday at the seaside during the big strike. Six of the party spent exactly half a sovereign each, but Bill Harris was more extravagant. Bill spent three shillings more than the average of the party. What was the actual amount of Bill's expenditure?

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

134.—ROUND THE COAST.

IN order to place words round the circle under the conditions it is necessary to select words in which letters are repeated in certain relative positions. Thus, the word that solves our puzzle is "Swansea," in which the first and fifth letters are the same, and the third and seventh the same. We make our jumps as follows, taking the letters of the word in their proper order: 2—5, 7—2, 4—7, 1—4, 6—1, 3—6, 8—3. Or we could place a word like "Tarapur" (in which the second and fourth letters, and the third and seventh, are alike) with these moves: 6—1, 7—4, 2—7, 5—2, 8—5, 3—6, 8—3. But "Swansea" is the only word, apparently, that will fulfil the conditions of the puzzle

135.—THE MAGIC HEXAGON.



OUR illustration gives the only correct answer.

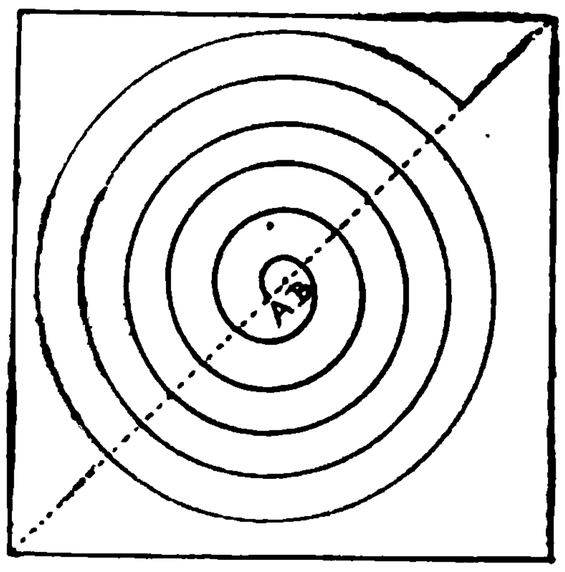
136.—THE TWO CANDLES.

THE candles must have burnt for three hours and three-quarters. One candle had one-sixteenth of its total length left, and the other four-sixteenths.

137.—QUEER ARITHMETIC.

ARRANGE ten matches thus: **FIVE**. Then take away the seven matches forming **FE** (seven-tenths of the whole), and you leave **IV**, or four.

138.—DRAWING A SPIRAL.

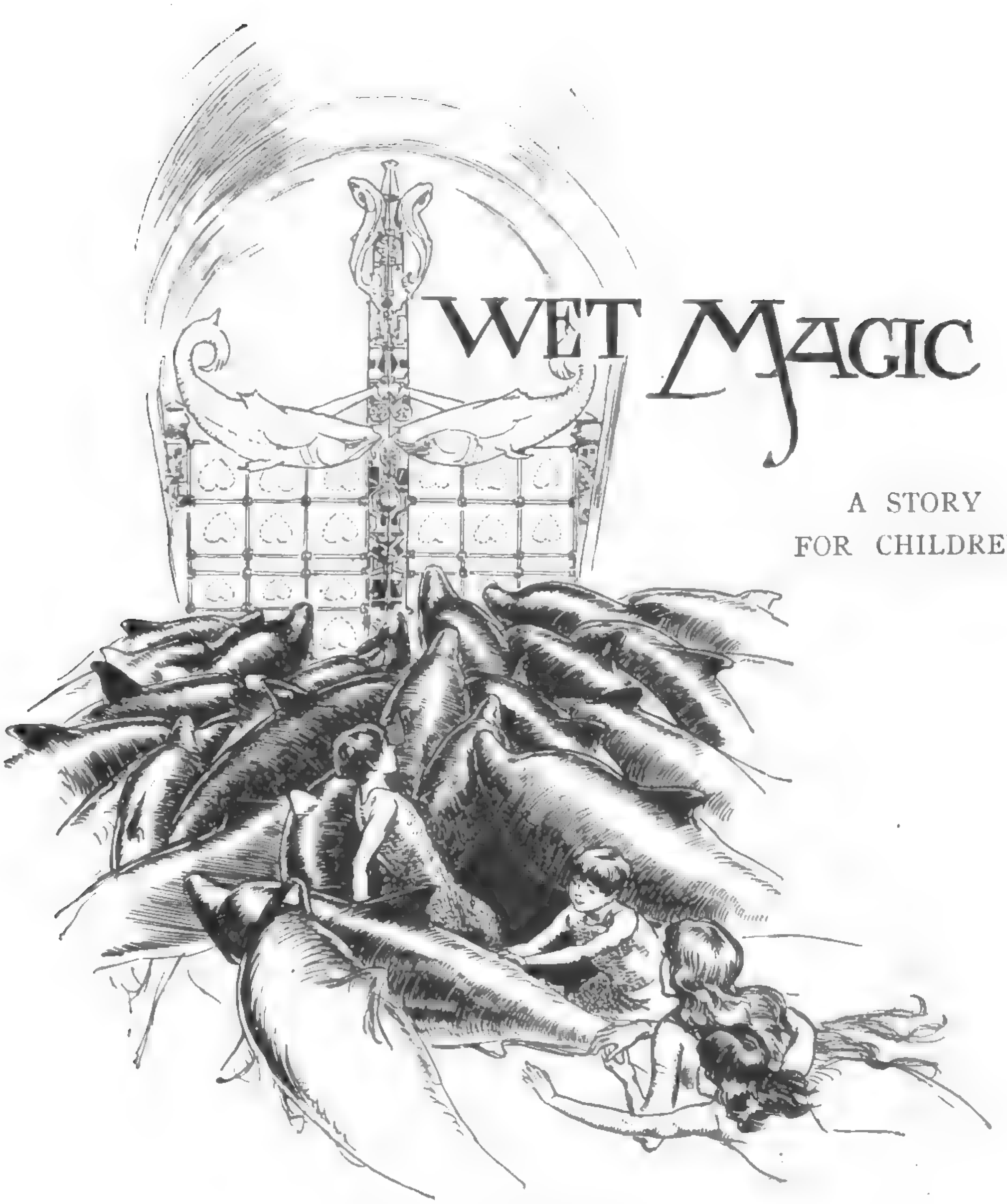


MAKE a fold in the paper, as shown by the dotted line in the illustration. Then, taking any two points, as A and B, describe semi-circles on the line alternately from the centres B and A, being careful to make the ends join, and the thing is done. Of course this is not a *true* spiral, but the puzzle was to produce the *particular* spiral that was shown, and that was drawn in this simple manner.

139.—A CHARADE.

FOUR-SCORE.

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WET MAGIC

A STORY
FOR CHILDREN.

By E. NESBIT.

Illustrated by H. R. Millar.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOOK PEOPLE.

EVEN in the midst of war there are intervals for refreshments. Our own soldiers, no matter how fierce, must eat to live, and the same is the case with the submarine regiments. The Crustacean Brigade took advantage of the lull in hostilities which followed the defeat of the Sea Horses to march back to the Palace and have a meal. A very plain meal it was, too, and very different from the "Banquet of Ovations," as Cathy pointed out afterwards. There were no prettily-spread tables decorated with bunches of seaweed, no plates or knives or forks. The food was passed round by hand, and there was one drinking-horn (a sea-cow's horn) to every six soldiers. They all sat on the ground as you do at a picnic, and the Queen came and spoke a few hurried words to them when on her way to strengthen the defences of the golden gate. And, as I said, the food was plain. However, everyone had enough to eat, which was the main thing. Baskets of provisions were sent down to the Lobsters' guardroom.

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"It is important," said Princess Maia, "that our men should be on the spot in case they are needed, and the same with the dinner. I shall go down with the provisions and keep their hearts up."

"Yes, dear, do," said the Princess Freia; "but don't do anything rash. No *sorties* now. You Lobsters are so terribly brave. But you know mother said you weren't to."

"I know," said Maia. "Ah, me—war is a terrible thing! What a state the rivers will get into with all this water going on, and the winds all loose and doing as they like. It's horrible to think about. It will take ages to get things straight again."

(Her fears were only too well founded. All this happened last year—and you know what a wet summer *that* was.)

"I know, dear," said Freia; "but I know now who broke the sky, and it is very, very sorry—so we won't rub it in, will we?"

"I didn't mean to," said Maia, smiling kindly at the children, and went off to encourage her Lobsters.

"And now," said Francis, when the meal was over, "what are we going to do next?"

"We can't do anything but wait for news," said the Princess. "Our Scouts will let us know soon enough. I only hope the Book People won't attack us at the same time as the Underfolk. That's always the danger."

"How could they get in?" Mavis asked.

"Through the golden door," said the Princess. "Of course they couldn't do anything if we hadn't read the books they're in. That's the worst of Education. We've all read such an awful lot, and that unlocks the books and they can come out if anyone calls them. Even our fish are intolerably well read—except the Porpoises, dear things, who never could read anything. That's why the golden door is guarded by them, of course."

"If not having read things is useful," said Mavis, "we've read almost nothing. Couldn't we help guard the door?"

"The very thing," said the Princess, joyously; "for you possess the only weapon that can be used against these people or against the authors who created them. If you can truthfully say to them, 'I never heard of you,' your words become a deadly sword that strikes at their most sensitive spot."

"What spot?" asked Bernard. And the Princess answered, "Their vanity."

So the little party went towards the golden door and found it behind a thick wall of Porpoises. Incessant cries came from beyond the gates, and to every cry they answered like one Porpoise, "We never heard of you. You can't come in. You can't come in. We never heard of you."

"We sha'n't be any good here," said Bernard, among the thick, rich voices of the Porpoises. "They can keep anyone back."

"Yes," said the Princess; "but if the Book Folk look through the gate and see that they're only Porpoises their wounded vanity will heal, and they'll come on as strongly as ever. Whereas if they find human beings who've never heard of them the wounds ought to be mortal. As long as you're able truthfully to say that you don't know them they can't get in."

"Reuben would be the person for this," said Francis. "I don't believe he's read *anything*."

"Well, we haven't read much," said Cathy, comfortably; "at least, not about nasty people."

"I wish I hadn't," sighed the Princess through the noise of the voices outside the gate. "I know them all. You hear that cold squeak? That's Mrs. Fairchild. And that short, sharp, barking sound—that's Aunt Fortune. The sort of growl that goes on all the time is Mr. Murdstone, and that icy voice is Rosamund's mother—the one who was so hateful about the purple jar."

"I'm afraid we know some of those," said Mavis.

"Then be careful not to say you don't. There are heaps you don't know—John Knox and Macchiavelli and Don Diego and Tippoo Sahib and Marcus Aurelius and—I *must* go back. If anything should happen, fling your arms round the nearest Porpoise and trust to luck. These Book People can't kill—they can only stupefy."

"But how do you know them all?" Mavis asked. "Do they often attack you?"

"No, only when the sky falls. But they always howl outside the gate at the full moon."

So saying she turned away and disappeared in the crowd of faithful Porpoises.

And outside the noise grew louder and the words more definite.

"I am Mrs. Randolph. Let me in!"

"I am good Mrs. Brown. Let me in!"

"I am Eric, or Little by Little. I *will* come in!"

"I am Elsie, or Like a Little Candle. Let me in—let me in!"

"I am Mrs. Markham."

"I am Mrs. Squeers."

"I am Uriah Heep."

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"I am Montdidier."
"I am King John."
"I am Caliban."
"I am the Giant Blunderbore."
"I am the Dragon of Wantley."

And they all cried, again and again: "Let us in! Let me in! Let me in!"

The strain of listening for the names and calling out "I don't know you!" when they didn't and saying nothing when they did became almost unbearable. It was like that horrid game with the corners of the handkerchief, "Hold fast" and "Let loose," and you have to remember to do the opposite. Sooner or later an accident is bound to happen, and the children felt a growing conviction that it would be *sooner*.

"What will happen if they do get in?" Cathy asked a neighbouring Porpoise.

"Can't say, miss, I'm sure," it answered.

"But what will you do?"

"Obstruct them in the execution of our duty," it answered. "You see, miss, they can't kill; they can only stupefy, and they can't stupefy us, 'cause why? We're that stupid already we can't hold no more. That's why they trust us to defend the golden gate," it added, proudly.

The babel of voices outside grew louder and thicker, and the task of knowing when to say "I don't know you," and so wound the vanity of the invaders, grew more and more difficult. At last the disaster, foreseen for some time, with a growing plainness, came upon them.

"I am the Great Seal," said a thick, funny voice.

"I don't know you," cried Cathy.

"You do—he's in history. James the Second dropped him in the Thames," said Francis. "Yes, you've done it again."

"Shut up," said Bernard.

The last two remarks were made in a deep silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of the Porpoises. The voices behind the golden gate had died down and ceased. The Porpoises massed their heavy bulk close to the door.

"Remember the Porpoises," said Francis. "Don't forget to hold on to a Porpoise."

Four of these amiable if unintellectual creatures drew away from their companions, and one came to the side of each child.

Every eye was fixed on the golden door, and then slowly—very slowly, the door began to open. As it opened it revealed the crowd that stood without—cruel faces, stupid faces, crafty faces, sullen faces, angry faces, not a single face that you ever could wish to see again, except poor Marcus Aurelius's, and his was not a cheerful face at the best.

Then slowly, terribly, without words, the close ranks of the Book People advanced. Mrs. Fairchild, Mrs. Markham, and Mrs. Barbauld led the van. Closely following came the Dragon of Wantley, the Minotaur, and the Little Man that Smitham knew. Then came Mr. Murdstone, neat in a folded white neckcloth, and clothes as black as his whiskers. Miss Murdstone was with him, every bead of her alight with gratified malice. The children found that they knew, without being told, the name of each foe now advancing on them. Paralyzed with terror, they watched the slow and terrible advance. It was not till Eric, or Little by Little, broke the silence with a whoop of joy and rushed upon them that they remembered their own danger, and clutched the waiting Porpoises. Alas! it was too late. Mrs. Markham had turned a frozen glare upon them, Mrs. Fairchild had wagged an admonitory forefinger, wave on wave of sheer stupidity swept over them, and next moment they lost consciousness and sank, each with his faithful Porpoise, into the dreamless sleep of the entirely unintelligent. In vain the main body of the Porpoises hurled themselves against the intruders; their heroism was vain. Overwhelmed by the heavy truisms wielded by the enemy, they turned and fled in disorder, and the conquering army entered Merland.

Francis was the first to recover consciousness. The Porpoise to which he had clung was fanning him with its fin, and imploring him, for its sake, to look up, to speak.

"All right, old chap," said Francis. "I must have fallen asleep. Where are the others?"

They were all there, and the devoted Porpoises quickly restored them to consciousness.

The four children stood up and looked at each other.

"I wish Reuben was here," said Cathy. "He'd know what to do."

"He wouldn't know any more than we do," said Francis, haughtily.

"We *must* do *something*," said Mavis. "It's our fault again."

"It's mine," said Cathy, "but I couldn't help it."

"If you hadn't one of us would have," said Bernard, seeking to console. "I say, why do only the nasty people come out of the books?"

"*I* know that," said his Porpoise, turning

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"THEN SLOWLY, TERRIBLY, WITHOUT WORDS, THE CLOSE RANKS OF THE BOOK PEOPLE ADVANCED."

his black face eagerly towards them. "The stupidest people can't help knowing *something*. The Underfolk get in and open the books—at least, they send the Bookworms in to open them. And, of course, they only open the pages where the enemies are quartered."

"Then ——" said Bernard, looking at the golden gate, which swung open, its lock hanging broken and useless.

"Yes," said Mavis, "we could, couldn't we? Open the other books, we mean!" She appealed to her Porpoise.

"Yes," it said, "perhaps you could. Human children can open books, I believe. Porpoises can't. And Mer people can't open the books in the cave of learning, they have to get them from the public Mer-libraries. I can't help knowing that," it added. The Porpoises seemed really ashamed of not being thoroughly stupid.

"Come on," said Francis, "we'll raise an army to fight these Book people. Here's something we can do that *isn't* mischief."

"You shut up,"

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said Bernard, and thumping Cathy on the back told her to never mind.

They went towards the golden gate.

"I suppose all the nasty people are out of the books by now?" Mavis asked her Porpoise, who followed her with the close fidelity of an affectionate dog.

"*I* don't know," it said, with some pride. "I'm stupid, I am. But I can't help knowing that no one can come out of books unless they're called. You've just got to tap on the back of the book and call the name and then you open it, and the person comes out. At least, that's what the Bookworms do, and I don't see why you should be different."

What *was* different, it soon appeared, was the water in the stream in the cave of learning, which was quite plainly still water in some other sense than that in which what they were in was water. That is, they could not walk in it; they had to swim. The cave seemed dark, but enough light came from the golden gate to enable them to read the titles of the books when they had pulled away the seaweed which covered many of them. They had to hold on to the rocks—which were books—with one hand, and clear away the seaweed with the other.

You can guess the sort of books at which they knocked—Kingsley and Shakespeare and Marryat and Dickens, Miss Alcott and Mrs. Ewing, Hans Andersen and Stevenson, and Mayne Reid—and when they had knocked they called the name of the hero whose help they desired, and "Will you help us," they asked, "to conquer the horrid Book People, and drive them back to cover?"

And not a hero but said, "Yes, indeed we will with all our hearts."

And they climbed down out of the books, and swam up to the golden gate and waited, talking with courage and dignity among themselves, while the children went on knocking at the backs of books—which are books' front doors—and calling out more and more heroes to help in the fight.

Quentin Durward and Laurie were the first to come out, then Hereward and Amyas and Will Cary, David Copperfield, Rob Roy, Ivanhoe, Cæsar and Anthony, Coriolanus and Othello; but you can make the list for yourselves. They came forth, all alive and splendid, with valour and the longing to strike once more a blow for the good cause as they had been used to do in their old lives.

"These are enough," said Francis, at last. "We ought to leave some in case we want more help later."

You see for yourselves what a splendid company it was that swam to the golden gate—there was no other way than swimming, except for Perseus—and awaited the children. And when the children joined them—rather nervous at the thought of the speeches they would have to make to their newly-recruited regiment—they found that there was no need of speeches. The faithful Porpoises had not been too stupid to explain the simple facts of danger and rescue.

It was a proud moment for the children when they marched towards the Palace at the head of the band of heroes whom they had pressed into the service of the Merland. Between the clipped seaweed hedges they went, and along the paths paved with pearl and marble, and so, at last, drew near the Palace. They gave the watchword—"Glory."

"Or Death," said the sentry. And they passed on to the Queen.

"We've brought a reinforcement," said Francis, who had learned the word from Quentin Durward as they came along. And the Queen gave one look at her reinforcements' faces and said, simply:—

"We are saved."

The horrible Book People had not attacked the Palace; they had gone furtively through the country killing stray fish and destroying any beautiful thing they happened to find. For these people hate beauty and happiness. They were now holding a meeting in the Palace gardens, near the fountain where the Princesses had been wont to do their source service, and they were making speeches like mad. You could hear the dull, flat murmur of them even from the Palace. They were the sort of people who love the sound of their own silly voices.

The new-comers were ranged in orderly ranks before the Queen, awaiting her orders. It looked like a pageant or a fancy-dress parade. There was St. George in his armour, and Joan of Arc in hers—heroes in plumed hats and laced shirts, heroes in ruffs and doublets—brave gentlemen of England, gallant gentlemen of France. For all the differences in their dress, there was nothing motley about the band which stood before the Queen. Varied as they were in dress and feature, they had one quality in common, which marked them as one company. The same light of bravery shone on them all, and became them like a fine uniform.

"Will you," the Queen asked of their leader—a pale, thin-faced man in the dress of

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a Roman—"will you do just as you think best? I would not presume," she added, with a kind of proud humility, "to teach the game of war to Cæsar."

"O Queen," he answered, "these brave gentlemen and I will drive back the intruders, but, having driven them back, we must ourselves return through those dark doors which we passed when your young defenders called our names. We will drive back the *men*—and by the look of them 'twill be an easy task. But Cæsar wars not with women, and the women on our side are few, though each, I doubt not, has the heart of a lioness."

He turned towards Joan of Arc with a smile, and she gave him back a smile as bright as the sword she carried.

"How many women are there among you?" the Queen asked, and Joan answered:—

"Queen Boadicea and Torfrida and I are but three."

"But we three," cried Torfrida, "are a match for three hundred of such women as those. Give us but whips instead of swords, and we will drive them like dogs to their cloth-bound kennels."

"I'm afraid," said the Queen, "they'd overcome you by sheer weight. You've no idea how heavy they are." And then Kathleen covered herself with glory by saying, "Well, but what about Amazons?"

"The very thing," said Cæsar, kindly. "Would you mind running back? You'll find them in the third book from the corner where the large purple starfish is; you can't mistake it."

The children tore off to the golden gate, rushed through it, and swam to the spot where unmistakably the purple starfish spread its violet rays. They knocked on the book, and Cathy, by previous arrangement, called out:—

"Come out, please, Queen of the Amazons, and bring all your fighting ladies."

Then out came a very splendid lady in glorious golden armour. "You'd better get some boats for us," she said, standing straight and splendid on a ledge of rock, "enough to reach from here to the gate, or a bridge. There are all these things in Cæsar's books. I'm sure he wouldn't mind your calling them out."

So Francis called out a bridge, and when it was not long enough to reach the golden gate he called another. And then the Queen called her ladies, and out came a procession, which seemed as though it would never end, of tall and beautiful women armed and equipped for war. They carried bows, and the children noticed that one side of their chests was flatter than the other. And the procession went on and on, passing along the bridge and through the golden gate, till Cathy grew quite dizzy; and at last Mavis said, "Oh, your Majesty, do stop them. I'm sure there are heaps, and we shall be too late if we wait for any more."

So the Queen stopped the procession and they went back to the Palace, where the Queen of the Amazons greeted Joan of Arc and the other ladies as though they were old acquaintances.

In a few moments their plans were laid. I wish I could describe to you the great fight between the Nice Book People and the others. But I have not time, and, besides, the children did not see all of it, so I don't see why *you* should. It was fought out in the Palace gardens. The armies were fairly evenly matched as to numbers, because the Bookworms had let out a great many Barbarians, and these, though not so unpleasant as Mr. Murdstone and Mrs. Fairchild, were quite bad enough. The children were not allowed to join in the battle, which they would dearly have liked to do. Only from a safe distance they heard the sound of steel on steel, the whir of arrows, and the war-cries of the combatants. And presently a stream of fugitives darkened the pearly pathways, and one could see the heroes with drawn swords following in pursuit.

And then, among those who were left, the shouts of war turned suddenly to shouts of laughter, and the Merlish Queen herself moved towards the battlefield. And as she drew near she, too, laughed. For, it would seem, the Amazons had only shot their arrows at the men among their foes—they had disdained to shoot the women, and so good was their aim that not a single woman was wounded. Only, when the Book People had been driven back by the Book Heroes the Book Heroines advanced and, without more ado, fell on the remaining foes. They did not fight them with swords or spears or arrows or the short, sharp knives they wore—they simply picked up the screaming Bookwomen and carried them back to the books where they belonged. Each Amazon caught up one of the foe and, disregarding her screaming and scratching, carried her back to the book where she belonged, pushed her in, and shut the door.

Boadicea carried Mrs. Markham and her brown silk under one bare, braceletted arm as though she had been a naughty child. Joan of Arc made herself responsible for

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"EACH AMAZON CAUGHT UP ONE OF THE FOE."

Aunt Fortune, and the Queen of the Amazons made nothing of picking up Miss Murdstone, beads and all, and carrying her in her arms like a baby. Torfrida's was the hardest task. She had, from the beginning, singled out Alftruda, her old and bitter enemy, and the fight between them was a fierce one, though it was but a battle of looks. Yet before long the fire in Torfrida's great dark eyes seemed to scorch her adversary; she shrank before it, and shrank and shrank till at last she turned and crept back to her book and went in of her own accord, and Torfrida shut the door.

"But," said Mavis, who had followed her, "don't you live in the same book?"

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Torfrida smiled.

"Not quite," she said. "That would be impossible. I live in a different edition, where only the nice people are alive. In hers it is the nasty ones."

"And where is Hereward?" Cathy asked, before Mavis could stop her. "I do love him, don't you?"

"Yes," said Torfrida, "I love him. But he is not alive in the book where I live. But he will be—he will be."

And smiling and sighing, she opened her book and went into it, and the children went slowly back to the Palace. The fight was over, the Book People had gone back into their books, and it was almost as though they had never left them—not quite, for they had seen the faces of the heroes, and the books where these lived could never again now be the same to them. All books, indeed, would now have an interest far above any they had ever held before—for any of these people might be found in any book. You never know.

The Princess Freia met them in the Palace courtyard, and clasped their hands and called them the preservers of the country, which was extremely pleasant. She also told them that a slight skirmish had been fought on the Mussel-beds south of the city, and the foe had retreated.

"But Reuben tells me," she added—"that boy is really worth his weight in pearls—that the main body are to attack at midnight. We must sleep now, to be ready for the call of duty when it comes. Sure you understand your duties? And the power of your buttons and your antidotes? I might have time to remind you later. You can sleep in the armoury—you must be awfully tired. You'll be asleep before you can say John Dory."

So they lay down on the seaweed, heaped along one end of the Oysters' armoury, and were instantly asleep.

It may have been their natures, or it may have been the influence of the magic coats. But, whatever the cause, it is certain that they lay down without fear, slept without dreams, and awoke without alarm when an Oyster corporal touched their arms and whispered, "Now!"

They were wideawake on the instant, and started up, picking their oyster shields from the ground beside them.

"I feel just like a Roman soldier," Cathy said. "Don't you?"

And the others owned that so far as they knew the feelings of a Roman soldier, those feelings were their own.

The shadows of the guardroom were changed and shifted and flung here and there by the torches carried by the busy Oysters. Phosphorescent fish these were, and gave out a mooney light like that of the pillars in the cave of learning. Outside the Lobster-guarded arch the water showed darkly clear. Large phosphorescent fish were twined round pillars of stone, rather like the fish you see on the lamp-posts on the Thames Embankment, only in this case the fish were the lamps. So strong was the illumination that you could see as clearly as you can on a moonlit night on the downs, where there are no trees to steal the light from the landscape and bury it in their thick branches.

All was hurry and bustle. The Salmoners had sent a detachment to harass the flank of the enemy, and the Sea-urchins, under the command of Reuben, were ready in their seaweed disguises.

There was a waiting time, and the children used it to practise with their shells, using the thick stems of seaweed—thick as a man's arm—to represent the ankles of the invading force, and by this time were fairly expert at the trick which was their duty. Francis had just nipped an extra fat stalk and released it again by touching the secret spring when the word went round, "Every man to his post!"

The children proudly took up their post next to the Princess, and hardly had they done so when a faint yet growing sound knocked gently at their ears. It grew and grew and grew till it seemed to shake the ground on which they stood, and the Princess murmured, "It is the tramp of the army of the Underfolk. Now, be ready. We shall lurk among these rocks. Hold your good oyster-shell in readiness, and when you see a foot near you clip it, and at the same time set down the base of the shell on the rock. The trusty shell will do the rest."

"Yes, we know, thank you, dear Princess," said Mavis, "Didn't you see us practising?"

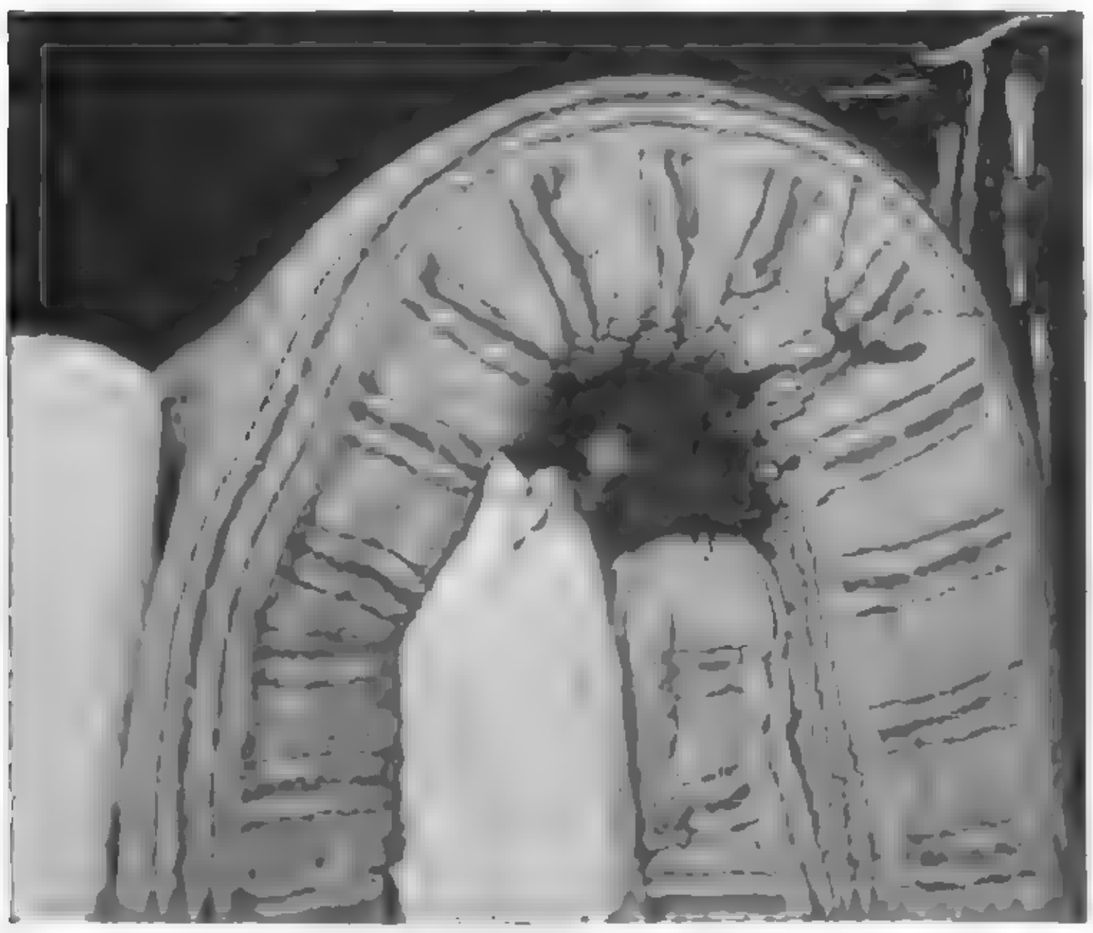
But the Princess was not listening; she had enough to do to find cover for her troops among the limpet-covered rocks.

(To be continued.)

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CURIOSITIES.

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]



ROBIN'S NEST IN A BED.

I AM sending you a photograph of a robin's nest recently built in the fold of a bed. The bed, which is one of forty-seven in a dormitory of a large public institution near London, being temporarily unused, was rolled up, and although beds on either side were nightly occupied and cleaning and bed-making operations were constantly going on in the dormitory, the nest was built in the short space of four days.—Mr. C. G. Rolliston, Napsbury, St. Albans.

NOT SO DANGEROUS AS IT LOOKS.

MOST people would assume this to be a photograph of the dangerous exploit of some foolhardy adventurer, who is idly dangling his legs over the sea some hundreds of feet below. It is, however, but a piece of photographer's bluff, as the picture, which was taken at Spitzbergen, should be looked at horizontally. It will then be seen that the man has merely assumed a somewhat awkward pose for a second or two at a distance of a few feet from the ground.—Mr. D. Erskine Kidd, 11, Torstensonsgatan, Stockholm, Sweden.



AN EXTRAORDINARY PIECE OF WOOD-CARVING.

THE accompanying photograph shows what is believed to be the most complicated example of one-piece jack-knife work in the world. It was made by Mr. George W. Lockwood, Springdale, Conn., U.S.A., from a piece of butternut wood three feet long and one and three-quarter inches in diameter. The centre-



piece of nested hour-glasses is perfectly proportioned, and so accurate is the work that while each of the inner pieces is entirely separated from the others, revolving easily at the slightest touch, there remains an open space of less than one-sixteenth of an inch at the end. On one side of this is a quadruple chain, on the other a sextette. These are so arranged that, while each chain is complete in itself, each link in every chain is interlapped by a corresponding link in each of the other five. To be more explicit, each link in each chain is interlocked by twelve other links. If the reader is fond of puzzles, let him take some pieces of soft wire and endeavour to arrange them in this manner, and thus get a better idea of the difficulties involved in the work. It will be seen that the hour-glass at the end contains rings, which in turn encircle the frame enclosing the initials G. L., ending up with the ball and hook, all perfectly proportioned and without flaw or blemish.

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MEASURING A PLANT'S DRINK.

WHEN we cut flowers we put them in water to keep them fresh. Like human beings, they can exist for long periods on water alone, as the liquid forms a considerable portion of their bulk.. The drinking capabilities of plants vary a great deal, and at a recent scientific exhibition held at Surbiton some ingenious devices were shown to register the different actions of plant life. Our illustration shows one which enables anyone to tell exactly how much water a cut flower or shoot would absorb in a given time. The apparatus consists of a twin glass tube with a coiled formation at the base. The flower is placed through a cork into the water in the upper end of the branch tube, and the lower end, which is inserted in a vessel filled with water, is lifted out and replaced, thus allowing an air bubble to enter the tube. As the plant drinks the water the bubble is forced along the coiled glass tube as fresh water enters behind it, and the amount taken by the flower is, of course, the quantity behind the air globe.—Mr. C. J. L. Clarke, 5 and 6, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

A PICTURE MADE OF FLOWERS.

I AM sending you a photograph of a picture made almost entirely of flowers gathered last year, and when I add that the dark purple clematis, various coloured pansies, the vermilion montbretia, light and dark lobelia, and other flowers were used, you will agree, perhaps, when I say that the result is as gay as a water-colour. In all, over two dozen varieties were used, many of them being wild flowers. This idea occurred to me as being a good plan for mounting one's specimens, and in these days, when even elementary school-children are taken on excursions by their teachers to study botany, it may possibly become of educational value.—Mr. D. H. Walford, 6, Courtenay Street, Marle Hill, Cheltenham.



Bridge Problem.

BY ERNEST BERGHOLT.

The following end-position has been exciting a great deal of controversy at the Dottyville Bridge Club. The question is: How many tricks can A and B win against any possible defence by Y and Z? Hearts are trumps, and it is A's lead.

A asserted that he could win *six* out of the seven tricks. A bystander denied this, but conceded that *five* were possible. Z, however, offered to bet even money that he could prevent A from winning more than *four*. Which was right? The cards are set out below.

Clubs—King, queen, knave, 7.
Diamonds—King.
Spades—Knave, 4.

Hearts—King, 7.
Clubs—10, 6.
Diamonds—Knave, 10, 9.

B
Y Z
A

Hearts—6, 3.
Clubs—9, 8.
Diamonds—8.
Spades—Ace, king.

Hearts—Queen, knave, 4.
Clubs—4.
Spades—8, 7, 5.

(Solution will appear next month.)

Solution of Last Month's Double Dummy Bridge Problem.

BY W. H. WHITFELD.

The card underlined wins the trick. The card immediately beneath is led to the next trick.

A	Y	B	Z
Spades 8	Spades 3	Diamonds 3	Spades knave
Hearts queen!	Hearts 10	Hearts knave	Hearts 7
Spades queen	Spades 10	Diamonds 6	Spades ace
Hearts 3	Clubs 3	Diamonds ace	Diamonds 10
Hearts 8	Clubs 8	Diamonds qn.	Diamonds kv.
Clubs 4	Clubs ace	Clubs queen	Hearts 9
Clubs knave	Clubs 9	Hearts 4	Hearts ace

TRICK 2.—If Z were to win the knave of hearts, A B would obviously win the rest of the tricks; therefore, Z holds up his ace of hearts. A's only way now is to win his partner's trick by putting the queen on the knave.

TRICKS 4 AND 5.—A now discards his remaining hearts, retaining both his clubs, so as to win a trick with the knave.

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